

Museum Notes

for the week of February 8 – 14, 2026

by Carol Krogan, assistant curator

On July 5, 2000, I began working at the Vernon County Museum, 12 hours per week, assisting visitors and preparing exhibits. Now, over 25 years later (who knew!), it's time to retire. I am an Onalaska native so I had a lot to learn about Vernon County, and boy did I learn! So many stories and interesting people.

I enjoyed the variety of my position and especially liked assisting genealogists with their research and helping to solve any mysteries they may have had. Being a creative person, I also enjoyed putting exhibits together to educate museum visitors about the county and beyond. The subjects were varied: the Civil War, schools, civil defense, women in the military, photography, and tobacco, among other things. I also loved decorating for the holidays and seasons.

I have seen many volunteers come and go over the years and have made friendships with some. People from my past have come in the door to do research or make a donation, including high school classmates with ties to Vernon County and a distant cousin visiting from Georgia. I also found out that I am a cousin to the Norwegian genealogist Liv Marit Haakenstad who frequently visits the area.

There were a lot of changes over the years: the addition of our Main Street entrance in 2005, the transformation of the boiler room into a meeting room in 2011, the addition of an elevator in 2017, and the new HVAC system for the upper floors in 2025. All positive changes to make the museum visitor- and staff-friendly.

One of my favorite memories is a connection I made between a woman named Chele living in Australia, and her cousins here in Vernon County. The cousins didn't know each other but later met when one of them travelled to Australia to see her. By coincidence, this cousin's daughter was living near her. Several years later I was able to meet Chele.

I look forward to having free time to pursue my hobbies and get together with friends. My husband and I also plan to do some travelling. So many things to do.... Someday, I'm sure I will return to volunteer.

(Be sure to come to Carol's retirement party open house on Thursday, February 26, from 1 to 3PM, at the Vernon County Museum and History Center!)