



The Lake Forest Park Road Association Newsletter
Town of Sturgeon Bay, WI

Published twice yearly
Autumn 2025

President's Post

by David Wood (2810 LFPR)
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Summer is officially over; the days are getting shorter, and fall colors are emerging across the County and the state, but this week's daytime temperatures still remind me of glorious summer days. But I also know that the days won't stay this warm for long, so I am trying to enjoy them as much as I can, while I can. The crispness of the morning air portends what we all know: winter is coming!

The arrival of fall means it is time again for Octoberfest. Paul Lutzke (**3301 LFPR**) and Bob and Eileen Brown (**3110 and 3120 LFPR**) are again organizing this event for this Saturday, October 4, at 5 pm at Sawyer Park Pavilion, 36 South Neenah Avenue, Sturgeon Bay. And once winter finally settles in, Doug McGee (3268 LFPR) will again arrange the Winter Dinner, now scheduled for January 17, 2026.

Kim Krueger has put together another wonderful edition of *Between Lake and Forest*, our semi-annual newsletter. This issue contains an important article on the proposed Gilbert Farm's CAFO Expansion by Annette Vincent (**2794 LFPR**). Many residents have expressed concerns about this issue because of the potential risks to our groundwater supply.

I encourage everyone to read Annette's article and to attend the upcoming public hearing on November 5, either in person or by Zoom. There is also a brief update on AT&T Fiber broadband project and another fascinating article on the history of Lake Forest Park Road by John Vincent (**2794 LFPR**). Hopefully reading these articles will inspire you to submit your own content to a future edition.

I look forward to seeing you at one of our upcoming events, or just along the road!





LFPRA Calendar of Events

- **Saturday, October 4** Octoberfest Dinner, Sawyer Park Pavilion
- **Wednesday, October 15** Fall newsletter distribution via email (might be earlier)
- **Saturday, January 17, 2026** Winter Dinner, Nightingale Supper Club
- **April 1, 2026** Spring newsletter articles **DUE**
- **April 15, 2026** Spring newsletter distribution via email (might be earlier)
- **May 10, 2026** Membership forms **DUE** - Road Directory printed this year
- **June 2026, date TBD** Annual Meeting; distribution of Road Directories

Octoberfest!



Saturday, October 4 at the
Sawyer Park Pavilion.

Dinner catered by Sonny's will
be served at **5 pm**.

Featured items: Italian beef, chicken, salads,
cheese/sausage/crackers & dessert.

Please bring your own beverage.

Come earlier to help set up and socialize!

No need to RSVP - just show up!

Many thanks to Paul Lutzke and Bob and Eileen Brown for their hard work in setting up this event.

We will need NEW Octoberfest coordinators next year if this event is to continue - perhaps that could be YOU!

Winter Dinner!

Join your neighbors for a festive evening at the **Nightingale Supper Club** on **Saturday, January 17, 2026**.

Meet for **cocktails at 5**, followed by dinner from the menu at 6.

It's always a lovely time and a fun break in the post-holiday doldrums.

Please let Doug McGee know if you plan to attend. Call (920) 743-8684 or email dpmcgee1925@charter.net



Changes

Please report any address, phone number changes, and similar updates to the Directory/Database Manager, Jon Krainak, at jonathan.krainak@gmail.com.

Other life changes and news for inclusion in the next newsletter may be sent to Kim Krueger, Newsletter Editor, at 805shiva@gmail.com.



New Owners

Karen and Tom Zarse have purchased the former Carney property at **2970 LFPR**.

Karen's email is: zarsek@gmail.com Tom's email is: tzarse@gmail.com

Welcome to the Road!

Moving On

Steve and Nancy Carney, formerly of **2970 LFPR**, have moved to a home on South Lake Michigan Drive.

According to neighbor Dick Wilcox, **Carol Schuster**, formerly of **2912 LFPR**, has moved to a continuing care home.

Passings

William "Bill" Barlas (2534 Canal Road) passed away on May 16, 2025. A resident of Sturgeon Bay since 2002, Bill was a familiar part of the Sturgeon Bay Y's "Fit for Life" group and loved to participate in races throughout the County. His favorite was the Fall 50. Bill will be missed by his wife, Ellen, his children, grandchildren, and many other family members and friends.



Lake Forest Park Road Association Officers		
President	David Wood	president@lakeforestparkrd.org
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Board Member	Paul Lutzke	paullutzke@hotmail.com
Board Member	Pat Nell	patnell1914@gmail.com
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	Rod Miller	roderickemiller@aol.com
Welcome Committee	Bonnie and Dennis Connolly	dconnoll@charter.net
	Jean Laundrie	dlaundrie@charter.net
Winter Dinner	Doug McGee	dpmcgee1925@charter.net

Gilbert Farm CAFO Expansion Update

by Annette Vincent (2794 LFPR)

Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) are incompatible with Door County's geology, tourism economy, and health of its residents. Gilbert Farm at County Road T and Mathey is proposing to expand to 2430 animal units from its current 1443. Door County has very shallow soils with an underlying karst geology¹ and in my opinion, is NOT an appropriate location for any kind of CAFO. Kewaunee County residents can relate to the dangers of CAFOs as many of their wells have been polluted by nearby large farms and made unsafe to drink, necessitating costly purification systems or bottled water.

The proposed expansion, which is 2 to 3 miles away from most Road residents, is an issue that concerns all of us who live on Lake Forest Park Road and depend upon our well water remaining safe. We have received word that the **DNR public hearing** will be **Wednesday, Nov. 5 at 10 am at the Door County Gala in Sturgeon Bay and a Zoom option will be available** for all those unable to attend in person. Although no official public notice has been published yet, it should appear in the *Door County Advocate* very soon. There will be a 30-day comment period before the public hearing as well as for 7 days afterwards. The information for accessing these options will be in the public notice as well as via our road email system. A very good article was published in *The Knock*, Door County's online news source. While I do not agree with the Gilberts' assessment, *The Knock* did a good job of covering both sides and some of the controversy. <https://doorcountynock.org/>

Here is an update on some crucial information that John and I, along with Rod Miller, have discovered as we researched the permit process and the location involved. We have talked in person with Bill Schuster, who led Door County Soil & Water Conservation for over 35 years. He informed us that a sinkhole is present on the farm in a closed depression adjacent to the current production facilities and in the vicinity of a proposed 8-million-gallon liquid manure storage facility (**See Exhibits 1 & 2 below and on the following page**). Bill has notified Greg Coulthurst, the current head of DCSWC, who has informed the DNR. Bill was very concerned that a containment breach in the liquid manure storage facilities would be catastrophic as gravity would channel the liquid into this sinkhole and into the aquifer of the surrounding area.



Exhibit 1:
Sinkhole near production facilities at Gilbert Farms (per Bill Schuster, DCSWC, retired)

Gilbert Farm CAFO Expansion Update, continued

Previous sinkhole accidents illustrate the danger. A spreading accident in 2014 over a sinkhole near Jacksonport sickened at least 16 people and contaminated wells for weeks.^{2,3,4} A manure storage facility contains millions of gallons of liquid manure and could cause far more significant damage. Bill Schuster recommended building some redundancy protection into the holding facilities that would direct any liquid manure away from the sinkhole and hold it until it could be contained further. In 2023, Door County had three mechanical failures of manure equipment causing spillage, so the possibility of a containment breach is real.⁵ Two of the three mechanical failures were storage facility malfunctions. Also, the monitoring wells recommended by the DNR hydrogeologist are not required until the end of 2029, which would allow the farm to operate as a CAFO without the necessary monitoring for the next 4 years.



Exhibit 2:
Map of Gilbert Farms production facilities with sinkhole circled in blue

Currently, Gilbert Farms processes and spreads 5.7 million gallons per year of liquid manure and processed wastewater. With the expansion, this will increase to 21.4 million gallons even though they are adding 1000 animal units, approximately doubling their size. The reason for the large increase is that the farm is currently *not in compliance* on capturing and treating all of its waste from feed lots, calf barn, etc. Bringing the entire operation into compliance creates a 4-fold increase in waste with the proposed expansion.

If you are concerned about water quality in Door County and particularly your wells, please attend the **public hearing on Nov. 5 at 10 am either in person or by Zoom**. As previously mentioned, there is a public comment period open for 30 days before the hearing and 7 days afterwards if you prefer to also leave a comment for the DNR. If you are unable to attend the hearing, written comments, or questions (via postal mail or email) will carry the same weight as those presented in person. The zoom link I have received is on the following page.

Gilbert Farm CAFO Expansion Update, continued

Article notes

- ¹ <https://doorcountypulse.com/door-county-barely-filtered/>
- ² <https://doorcountypulse.com/seven-sickened-by-tainted-wells/>
- ³ <https://doorcountypulse.com/panel-hears-from-tainted-well-owners/>
- ⁴ <https://www.greenbaypressgazette.com/story/news/local/door-co/news/2015/01/16/farms-waste-hauler-fined-manure-spills/21893601/>
- ⁵ <https://doorcountypulse.com/three-manure-spills-in-door-county-this-season/>

**SAVE THIS INFORMATION!
PLEASE SPEAK OUT - OUR WATER QUALITY DEPENDS ON IT!**

The DNR Public Hearing will be Wednesday, November 5 at 10 am at the Door County Gala, 1023 Egg Harbor Road, Sturgeon Bay.

A Zoom option will be available for all those unable to attend in person.

Zoom Link

Register in advance for this meeting:

https://us02web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_wDTDSExLTYabXIH2TJRgsQ

Please make your voices heard!

If you have any further questions, Rod, John, or I will be happy to answer them. Just email us or give us a call. Our contact information is in the printed Directory and in this newsletter.

Well Water Quality Testing

As Annette Vincent explained in the previous article, Gilbert Farms (on County T) intends to expand their dairy operation. (Read the *Peninsula Pulse* article here: <https://doorcountypulse.com/cafo-permit-pending/>)

You may wish to obtain a baseline assessment of your well water before then. The registration deadline for the program shown here is fairly soon, though you have some time to submit water samples.

If you miss the deadline, Door County offers additional resources here: <https://www.co.door.wi.gov/569/Well-Water-Test-Kits>



UWO UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN
OSHKOSH

Fall 2025 DOOR COUNTY PRIVATE WELL MONITORING PROGRAM

Cost is only \$30*

*Discounted rate for the first 300 registrants; \$45 for those registering after the first 300 registrants.

TESTING PARAMETERS

- 💧 Total coliforms/*E. coli* (quantification)
- 💧 Nitrate (Nitrate + nitrite as N)

Optional arsenic, pH, alkalinity, hardness and iron tests available at an additional cost of \$25

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

The University of WI Oshkosh has been offering discounted well water quality testing through this program since 2019. The goal of this program is to provide education about the importance of testing your well water as well as build a database of groundwater quality data in Door County.

HOW IT WORKS

- RSVP using the link or QR code below by October 10th
- Receive sampling kit in mail
- Attend a virtual forum to learn how to sample
- Return your kit October 24th and 25th at designated drop-off locations
- Receive your results & countywide summary of study

Registration accepted through October 10th

RSVP online at <https://uwo.sh/doorco-wells-fall25> or using the QR code

*Prepayment using a credit card is accepted when you RSVP online, otherwise mailed checks are accepted made out to UW Oshkosh. Note that sampling kits will not be mailed out until payment is received.



Sample drop-off is October 24th & 25th – mark your calendars!

For more information, contact Jackie Behrens at eric@uwosh.edu or (920) 424-3148

Local Artists on View at the Miller Art Museum

The artwork of LFPR residents **Bonnie and Dennis Connolly (2732 LFPR)** will be exhibited in the 50th Annual Juried Show at the Miller Art Museum. Bonnie will be exhibiting an art quilt, and Dennis will be showing a photograph.

The Juried Annual Show, a mainstay of the Miller Art Museum's annual exhibition schedule, features contemporary work from Wisconsin visual artists throughout the state. Of the 346 entries submitted to the jury, only 58 works were selected for exhibition.

The exhibition will be on view from September 27 until November 8. The Miller Art Museum is located in the Sturgeon Bay branch of the Door County Public Library. Hours are 10-5 from Tuesday through Saturday; 10-7 on Monday; closed Sundays.

Congratulations to the Connollys!

What's the Tea?



What's happening on the Road? Well, you could wait for the newsletter to find out... OR you could join our Facebook page!

You'll need a Facebook account, of course. Then search for Lake Forest Park Road Association (the image below is our cover photo).



There are a few rules you MUST agree to and a few questions that you MUST answer in order to be admitted. We have strict security settings to try and keep out the miscreants.

Once you answer the security questions, you're in! You'll see a welcome message on the page, and then you can post away.

Share your fabulous nature photos. Ask your neighbors for contractor tips. Post lost and found items and giveaways. Paul Lutzke and Kim Krueger are your friendly neighborhood page moderators; contact either of them with any questions.

New Emergency Address Signs

by Jeff Feuerstein (2500 Canal Road)

Previously announced on our Facebook page, the new blue emergency address signs have been installed along LFPR and most of the township north of the canal as of this writing.

The County had been working on this for over 2 years. This project creates a County-wide standard address sign, reflective and viewable from both directions. It corrects some errors and duplications of addresses in certain areas. It also replaces signs installed years back that faded and were no longer legible. This project covers 16,000 signs! Plans are to start on the south side of the County and work north, township by township.

There were some questions on whether the new signs could be mounted to the existing posts and how that would be done. I contacted Ken Pabich, the County Executive, to see what the issues were. After our discussion, I proposed a custom designed angle bracket, found local fabricators to bid, secured prototypes and installed a 40 sign pilot run along LFPR (starting at 2500 Canal, of course).

Results of pilot run were excellent and the crew began installing additional signs on September 22 of this year. Some new posts will need to be installed and we are waiting for Diggers Hotline to check proposed location for any utilities. Enjoy the new signs!



Top: Old stamped, steel sign. **Middle:** Later aluminum sign that faded.
Bottom: New, 2-sided blue sign.

Photo credit: Jeff Feuerstein



The new signs in action!

Photo credit: John Baker

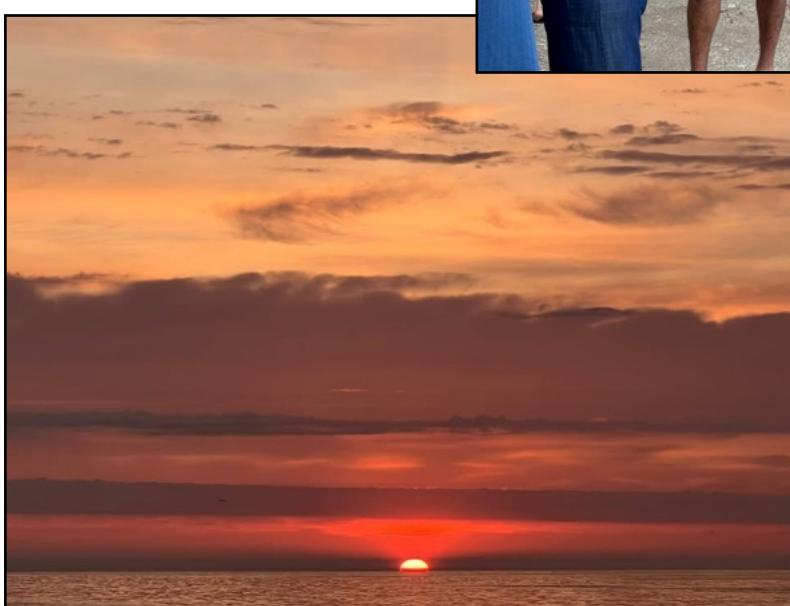


Summer Scenes

Photo credits:

Dennis Garrity, Kim Krueger, Paul Lutzke, Paul Mickelson, Carin Roy,
Bela Sandor, Annette Vincent, Mercedes Wadkins, and Joe Wallner

(Ed.: some images have been cropped from the originals)



Summer Scenes continued...



A Coast Guard helicopter, its dragonfly role model, Dog Day at the Shiloh Road Bark Park, the Northern Lights, and a rainbow.

Summer Scenes continued...



A dove keeps an eye on the beach, deer on patrol for tasty treats, and Wile E. Coyote.



Cutting the Cord

by David Wood (2810 LFPR)

president@lakeforestparkrd.org

Switching from an AT&T Landline to an internet phone can save you money and modernize your home phone. We installed an AT&T landline when we built our lake house (**2810 LFPR**) in 1998. Then in the mid-2000s, we added Charter Spectrum for internet service and plan to upgrade to AT&T Fiber when it becomes available next summer. Gradually over the years we have switched to using our computers, iPads, and mobile phones together with WiFi calling over the internet connection, for most of our communications needs. But somehow it has always been nice to have a landline number that people could call to reach whomever was at the house at a given moment.

AT&T has announced that they intend to end service for traditional landlines and they have certainly been raising their landline prices to prod current customers away, or at least make it worth their while to maintain service a little longer. So a couple of years ago, we finally made the switch to an internet phone service. And I only wish we had made the move much earlier!

There are multiple internet services to choose from, all of which allow you to keep your existing landline number. We opted to go with Ooma (<https://ooma.com>), which allows us to use our existing internet connection to provide clear, reliable phone calls at a fraction of a landline's price. Plus we get modern features like caller ID, voicemail, call blocking, and more without extra charges. Perhaps most importantly for us, Ooma will send an email or a text whenever someone leaves a message, which means we never have to call just to check if there are any messages while we are away.

To get started, you need to buy an Ooma Telo device (starting at \$99), either online or at a major retailer such as BestBuy. There are multiple options. You can use your existing phones or buy up to four Ooma handsets that wirelessly connect to the base device. Then visit Ooma's website to activate your device and select a plan. Ooma offers both basic "free" service (you pay only taxes and fees) and premium options. If you want to keep your current phone number, request number porting through Ooma; this process will take a few days and requires paying a \$40 fee. In any case, you will also need to call AT&T customer service to cancel your existing service.

We have switched from AT&T to Ooma both in our lake house and our Madison house. In our experience, the only downside of an internet phone service is that older security systems that rely on a traditional landline will need to be upgraded to use the internet as well. But this is something that you probably want to do as well for other reasons and possibly the subject of a future article.

Broadband Expansion Digs in this Fall!

by David Wood (2810 LFPR)

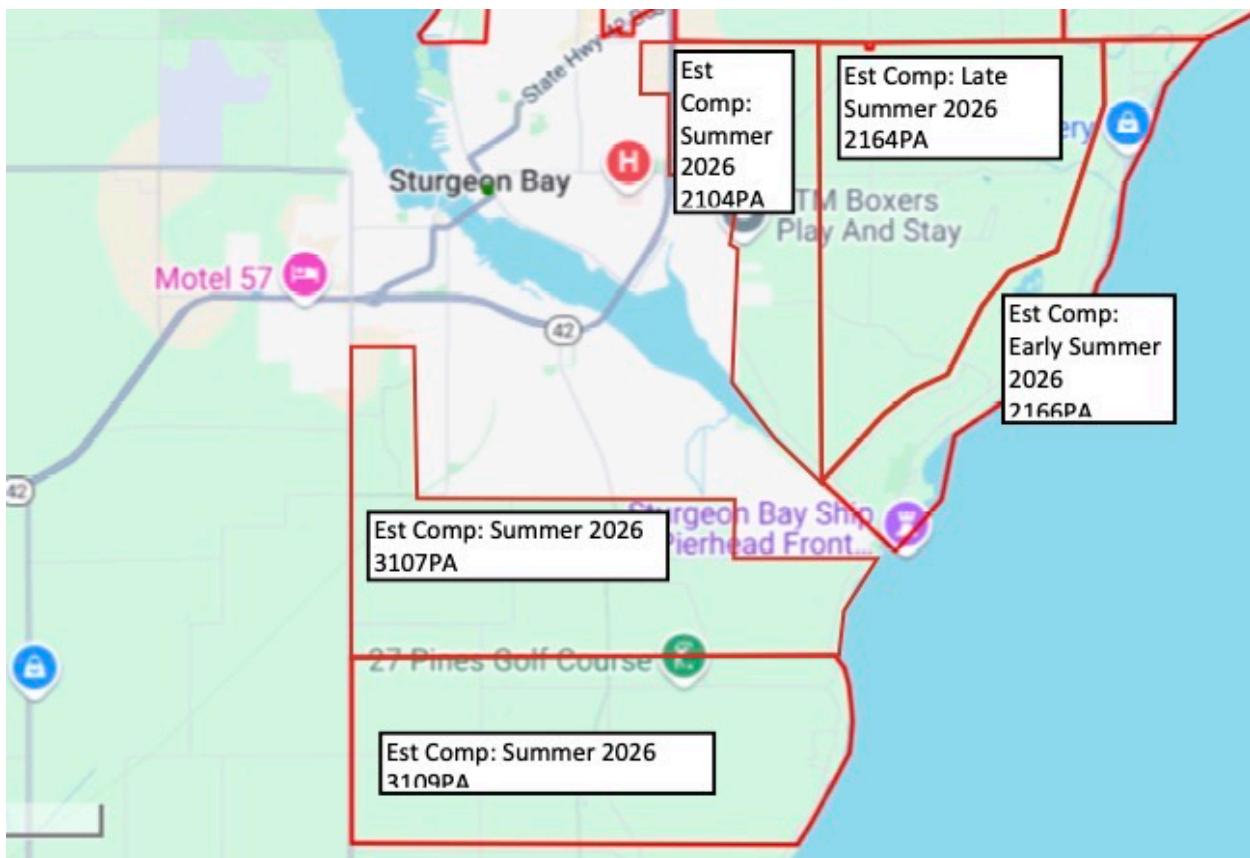
president@lakeforestparkrd.org

On June 5th, AT&T kicked off its public-private partnership with the Towns of Sturgeon Bay, Sevastopol, and Egg Harbor, along with the Village of Egg Harbor, with a high-profile public event headlined by Governor Tony Evers. AT&T compiled material from that event into a very nice promotional video that talks about the technology and its deployment:

<https://www.attconnects.com/its-a-great-day-were-gonna-get-broadband/>

The Town of Sturgeon Bay's project is currently in the planning/design phase, but construction is expected to begin soon. AT&T has pulled permits to install over two miles of conduit for fiber optic cable along County Roads T and TT, and that work will be completed sometime this fall.

The map below shows estimated completion dates for different parts of the township. As of this date, Lake Forest Park Road is expected to be ready for service early next summer. These timelines may be subject to change, but AT&T has committed to providing regular updates as progress continues. AT&T also reports that their local sales teams will be active in the community once AT&T fiber is a few weeks from being ready for orders. At that time, they will be engaging with residents, sharing information about AT&T Fiber, and accepting pre-orders for service.



Propane Contract Updates

by Rod Miller (5087 CTH TT) and Mike Johnston (2672 LFPR)

The LFPR Board has decided to once again select Ferrellgas as our recommended propane vendor for the 2025-2026 heating season. Their supply agreement was finalized and signed in late July 2025.

Ferrellgas proposed the most competitive offer. Below are the highlights of their proposal.

- Term is June 1, 2025 thru July 31, 2026.
- Fixed price is \$1.549 per gallon.
- No delivery charge and no Fuel Surcharge.
- Free lease of tanks owned by Ferrellgas; 1000 gallon tanks require 1200 gallons per year or lease is \$80.
- Free system test upon change over and free change out of competitor's tank.
- Pump over fee is \$99 (no charge if your existing tank is less than 50%).
- Free tank monitors and free tank monitoring.
- Ferrellgas has been serving our area for many years and has an outstanding reputation for service.

We also received proposals from Lakes Gas and AmeriGas. Their proposal details are summarized below:

Lakes Gas: Lakes Gas also offered a competitive proposal for the 2025-2026 heating season. Lakes Gas has been serving our area for many years and has an outstanding reputation for service with a fully staffed office in Sturgeon Bay. Lakes Gas does not require our Association to sign a purchase agreement. Our members simply identify themselves as members of the Lake Forest Park Road Association. Their offer highlights are:

- Term is July 1, 2025 thru June 30, 2026.
- Price is \$1.699 per gallon.
- No delivery fees.
- Free lease of tanks owned by Lakes Gas.
- Tank swap and pump over fee is \$100 and includes the Gas System Safety Inspection.
- Tank monitoring service is \$8.33 per month.

AmeriGas: AmeriGas has the least competitive offer for 2025-2026. Our Association did not sign their supply agreement, however they **may** honor this pricing for existing customers. Below are the highlights:

- Term is June 1, 2025 thru June 1, 2026.
- Price is \$1.75 per gallon.
- Will charge a fuel recovery fee (delivery fee) of \$7.99 per delivery.
- Free lease of tanks owned by AmeriGas.
- Tank installation charge is \$194.
- Please note, AmeriGas will charge current customers for tank removal.

The opportunity to participate in the special negotiated price for the purchase of LP Gas is one of the benefits of LFPR Association Membership. Participation is *completely voluntary*, and it is the *responsibility of the homeowner to contract directly with the propane vendor* of your choice, but it can provide savings to our homeowners. Please remember, it is important that our Association members contact their preferred supplier directly for **all additional terms and conditions**.

Propane Suppliers Contact information:

- Ferrellgas: Existing customers to place a propane order or customer service order call (715) 524-2137 or (800) 530-0113. For new customers switching to Ferrellgas please email Katie Monfre at katiemonfre@ferrellgas.com or Doug Harrer at dougharrer@ferrellgas.com. Mention LFPR Association membership and your contact information in your email and Katie or Doug will route your request to a customer service representative who will call you back and set up your new account.
 - Lakes Gas: Chuck Blessman; cblessman@lakesgas.com; (920)743-5704
 - AmeriGas: Jennifer Jackson; jennifer.jackson@amerigas.com; (919) 631-4593
- If you have any further questions or comments please reach out to Rod Miller at email: roderickmiller@aol.com or (972) 679-6332 or Mike Johnston at email: mlj.mike.johnston@gmail.com

LFPRA Third Thursday Women's Book Group

by Kim Krueger (3364 LFPR)

The women's book group meets on the **third Thursday** of the month at **Fifth and Jefferson Coffeehouse** at **10:00 a.m.**

If you are a female resident of the road and would like to join us, please email Donna Jamning at dwjanning@gmail.com. Here's our latest book report.



Illustration credit: Clare Schneider, NPR

April 2025: Remarkably Bright Creatures by Shelby Van Pelt (Fiction)

An unlikely friendship develops between an older widow who cleans overnight at an aquarium and a crafty Giant Pacific octopus named Marcellus. Friendship, hope, reckoning, and adaptation are central themes in this enjoyable and very popular novel.

May 2025: James by Percival Everett (Fiction)

Winner of the Pulitzer Prize, this is a masterful reimagining of Huckleberry Finn, told from the perspective of James (aka Jim), the enslaved man who journeys down the Mississippi in his quest for freedom. Harrowing and satirical, the novel explores the brutality of racism and slavery, and the fierce power of resistance.

June 2025: The Mighty Red by Louise Erdrich (Fiction)

The Mighty Red turned out to be not so mighty for most of us, but Erdrich didn't disappoint in great writing and character development featuring Native Americans, North Dakota farm families, and small town living (a shout out to Father Flirty!)

July 2025: Becoming Madam Secretary by Stephanie Dray (Historical fiction)

Frances Perkins, the first female Secretary of Labor, was instrumental in crafting the New Deal. This novel offers much to ponder on workplace relationships, the current political environment, and how legislation is achieved. Perkins was a passionate, smart, and tenacious woman who made many personal sacrifices in order to win safety, protection, and justice for the labor force of our country.

August 2025: Lovely One by Ketanji Brown Jackson (Memoir)

A memoir by the first Black female Supreme Court Justice, documenting her childhood, career, and brilliant legal journey to the highest court in the land. We are grateful that she is sitting on the Supreme Court at this moment in history, as well as serving as a powerful role model for young women.

September 2025: How to Read a Book: A Novel by Monica Wood (Fiction)

An absorbing tale of lives connected by tragedy and the redemptive power of reading. A volunteer reader at a women's prison enriches the lives of the inmates with a beloved book group. When one prisoner obtains early release, she unexpectedly connects with her victim's widower, and with the prison volunteer. Tidy coincidences abound, but the themes of forgiveness and new beginnings make it a worthy read. Look for the saucy African gray parrots! :)

Local History: History Resurfaces at Portage Park

by John Vincent (2794 LFPR)

Over Labor Day weekend, Ed Bennett of **3194 LFPR** was wading in shallow water with his son near the rocky point at Portage Park beach when they came upon what appeared to be the “bones” of a shipwreck. The long flat wooden plank structure was clearly visible through the sunlit water. Ed emailed me in my capacity as Road Historian to see if I knew anything about it, and he sent an aerial view of the wreck from the current Door County Web Map (**see Exhibit 1 below**).

I was pleased to see the familiar long-planked structure that my wife, Annette, and I had kayaked over for decades before it disappeared during the high water of 2019-2021. We assumed it had been washed away by the waves, but apparently it was simply buried under sand. Now back in full view again, it raises the questions: what is this structure and where did it come from?

What Is It?

Back in the late 1950’s, I recall walking this same shore with my grandfather and coming upon a long timber, half buried in the sand just above the water’s reach. He called it “the wreck” and warned me not to walk on it in my bare feet because of the exposed rusted spikes. Now Annette warned this 70-year-old me not to step on the planks of this current structure as I waded out in 3 feet of water to take a few photos (**see Exhibits 2 & 3 below**) on a calm mid-September afternoon.



Exhibit 1: Aerial view from Door Co. GIS map



Exhibit 2 (left): Length view with tapered cut

Exhibit 3 (right): Crossbeam with iron piping

Local History continued

Annette and I both recalled that when the lake was at its lowest level, you could see these same planks just inches below the surface. We returned later with a kayak and a ball of string to measure the submerged wooden remnant, which is approximately 51 feet long and a little over 8 feet wide at its longest and widest points. Could this be a piece of an old shipwreck, or possibly a ruined pier or fishing dock, or even a more recent wooden seawall?

If you look closely at **Exhibit 2**, you can see the edge of the structure tapering to a point in the foreground -- not unlike the deck of a ship. Annette made this observation late one night while staring at her phone after retiring to her hammock. The precise cut in the planking was clearly made by the hand of man and not by nature, indicating that this “point” was intended, which is more ship-like than pier or dock-like. A closeup of a crossbeam in **Exhibit 3** shows how the planks are secured together with what seem to be twisted spikes. This hardware felt remarkably light and brittle, with a texture more akin to wood than metal, as if it could be snapped off like a toothpick. Perhaps this is a sign of age. I’ve heard that iron can transform in this way when exposed to the elements for long periods. If this is a ship’s deck, it has clearly been flipped over and we are viewing its underside.

In late September, Robert Jaeck of the Wisconsin Underwater Archeological Association (WUAA) arrived to examine and photograph the structure. He indicated that his colleagues at the State Historical Society opined that it might be the side of a barge or a scow. His photo in **Exhibit 4 below** shows one of these “iron bars” pinning the planks together horizontally.



Exhibit 4: Underwater view of horizontal pin in planking.
Photo credit: Robert Jaeck, 9/25/2025

Local History continued

This technique was used in large pier construction, where thick planks were secured in this fashion to form surfaces to withstand heavy lumber loads. Doug Weimer, a Clay Banks Township historian, has seen and photographed this type of horizontal pinning on ruined piers that have occasionally resurfaced south of the canal. Large piers were commonplace in Clay Banks Township during the latter half of the 1800s.

The flatness of our structure, combined with this horizontal pinning, does make it appear to be more pier or dock-like than ship-like. I would discount this structure being a seawall, as most of the seawalls on Portage Bay were constructed during the high water scares of the 1970s and 1980s and most were made of steel. Although there were a few wooden seawalls constructed then, our structure looks to be older due to the aging of the hardware.

Where Did It Come From?

If the structure is a ship, it could possibly be the unnamed vessel that reportedly came apart in a gale quite close to this site on September 24, 1872. See the *Door County Advocate* article regarding this incident in **Exhibit 5 below**.

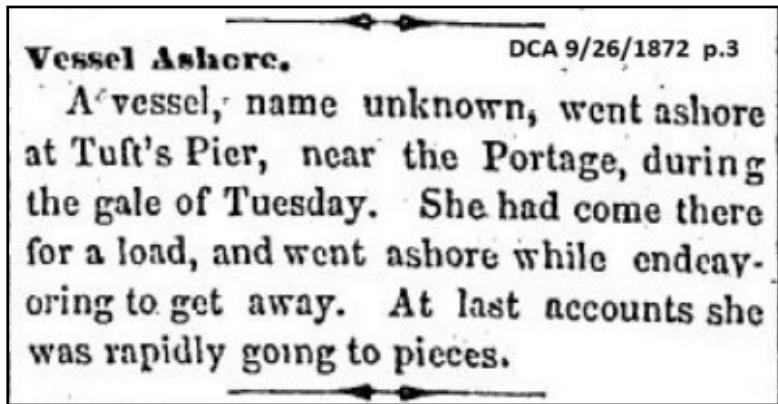


Exhibit 5: *Door County Advocate*

The "Portage" referred to in the article is the footpath that terminates on the shore near the rocky point where the submerged structure is located. "Tuft's Pier" was a large lumber pier operating in 1872, located approximately at the midpoint of Portage Bay, where today's Winnebago Drive accesses the lake. The following year this pier was renamed Scott's Pier, when James Tufts sold the pier and the property surrounding it to William Alexander Scott.¹

Local History continued

If the structure is a pier remnant, it could possibly be from Scott's Pier, which was broken up on several occasions by moving ice and storms, both while it was operating and after it was abandoned in the late 1870s. During one such incident in March of 1874, over "250 ft. of roadway of Scott's pier, north of the Portage, was carried away...".² Following its abandonment, remnants of the pier were visible through the turn of the century and pieces of it likely settled throughout the bay and along the beach. Scott's Pier was the largest pier known to exist along the two-mile stretch of Portage Bay shoreline.

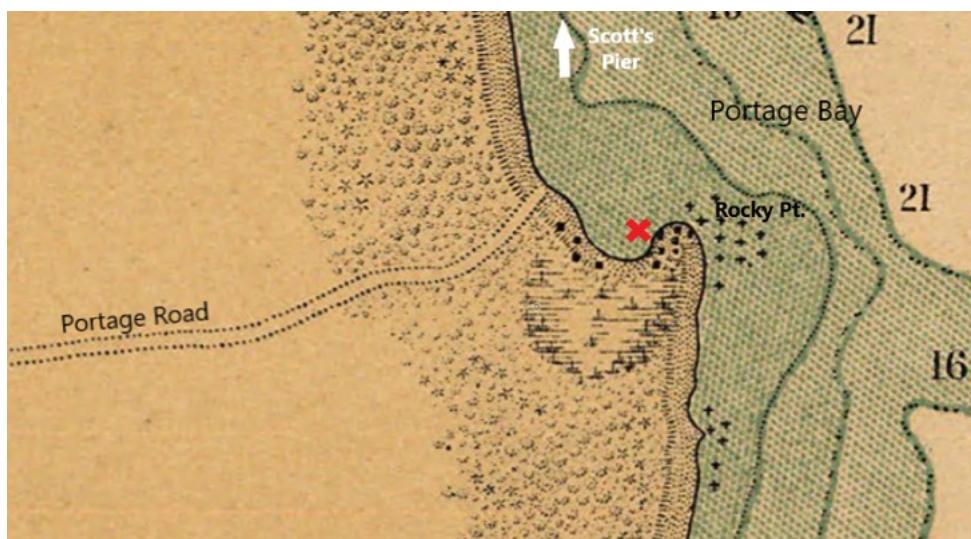


Exhibit 6: From 1901 chart of Sturgeon Bay, Canal and Harbor of Refuge and Lake Michigan; prepared by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

One last possibility is that the structure could have been a fishing dock located quite close to where it now lies ruined. During the 1860s and early 1870s, the anticipated entrance to the planned ship canal was to be at the portage at the south end of Portage Bay. Accordingly, it was anticipated that a settlement would be located there at the harbor of refuge, which would shelter the mouth of the canal.

When the entrance of the canal was relocated approximately 3/4 of a mile to the south, based on the 1871 canal survey, it does appear that some settlement did take place on the small bay at the Portage anyway. This settlement is shown on a 1901 map of the southern end of Portage Bay at Rocky Point (**see Exhibit 6 above**). The red X indicates the current location of the wreck/structure, while the solid black rectangles along the shore represent up to ten buildings or dwellings on this small bay.

Local History continued

I believe these structures were fishing-related and as such, it is quite likely that a dock was then located on this relatively sheltered portion of Portage Bay. Perhaps our “mystery structure” settled into the lake bottom right where it was originally located. We will continue to provide updates if anything definitive is further determined about the structure.

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Acknowledgements

My thanks to Ed Bennett, Annette Vincent, Robert Jaeck, Doug Weimer, Jeff Feuerstein, Bob Laviolette, Tamara Thomsen & Kendra Kennedy (Wisconsin Historical Society), and Joe Taylor & Matt Adelman (Door County Historical Museum) for their contributions to this article.

Notes

¹ Quit Claim Deed / Indenture dated 8/20/1873 between James Tufts (& wife) and Wm. Alexander Scott, Recorded in Door County on 8/22/1873 in Vol. A, p. 408.

² *Door County Advocate*, 3/12/1874, p. 3, Under “Local Slivers”.



Nothing Gold Can Stay

- Nature's first green is gold,
- Her hardest hue to hold.
- Her early leaf's a flower;
- But only so an hour.
- Then leaf subsides to leaf.
- So Eden sank to grief,
- So dawn goes down to day.
- Nothing gold can stay.

• Copyright Credit: Robert Frost, "Nothing Gold Can Stay" from *New Hampshire: A Poem with Notes and Grace Notes*. New York: Henry Holt and Co., 1923. Public Domain.