

# The Breeze

Serving the Geneva  
Lakes area

Walk the  
Shore Path

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Boating with  
the family

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Visit the  
museum

# Great summertime leisure activities

A warm breeze on a summer day embodies the spirit of this beloved season for millions of people. Seen by many as a season to relax and recharge, summer, not coincidentally, goes hand in hand with leisure.

With more time on their hands due to vacations from school and work and less hectic activity schedules, particularly for families that include school-aged children, individuals often find summer affords more time for leisure. With that in mind, people from all walks of life can consider these summertime leisure activities.

## PADDLEBOARDING

Paddleboarding is one leisurely way to spend a summer day. Paddleboarding requires physical exertion, so this might

not be the ideal activity for those looking to relax without lifting a finger. However, paddleboarders typically take to the water when it's at its most calm, making this a great activity for those who want to capitalize on peaceful, serene summer vibes.

## FISHING

Few activities may be more relaxing than fishing. Though there are many different ways to fish, some of which require considerable physical effort, casting a line and waiting for a fish to bite is a relaxing way to spend a day in nature. That might not seem like much to novices, but spending time in nature has been found to reduce stress and lower heart rates, which the U.S. Forest Service notes are both risk factors for cardiovascular disease.

## RELAX BY THE WATER

Whether it's a pool, lake or even the ocean, the water beckons each summer. Simply sitting on a beach or beside a lake or pool is a great way to pass the time without much stress. Nothing needs to be scheduled when relaxing poolside, lakeside or on a beach; simply enjoy some time to relax by the water.

## READ

Books make for great companions on warm summer afternoons. Reading is such a popular summer pastime that many bookstores set up displays featuring books that make for great beach reads, providing inspiration for individuals who aren't sure which book or books to dive into this summer. And much like other summertime

leisure activities, reading has been linked to reducing stress.

A 2009 study from researchers at the University of Sussex in England found that reading can reduce stress by as much as 68%.

## VISIT A MUSEUM

On summer afternoons when it's raining or too hot outside or individuals simply want to spend some time indoors, a museum makes for the perfect place to visit. Museums do not typically draw crowds in summer, making this an ideal season to visit. Many offer discounted prices to individuals like seniors and students, so this is a great way to relax without breaking the bank.

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# The top 7 BEST BOATS for families



For many boaters, boating is a family tradition – a way of life that includes shared experiences like the first time you take the steering wheel, catch a fish or trim a sail. Not only are moments like these fun for the whole family, but they also bring parents and kids closer together as the family becomes a “crew” through teamwork and shared responsibilities.

For every family member to join in and participate, however, you’ll naturally want to choose a type of boat that everyone can enjoy to the fullest potential.

Which is ideal for you and your family will depend on several factors: what type of boating does your family enjoy? How large does it need to be, and what accessories should it have? As you ask yourself these questions, remember that for most families, one of these seven boat types is likely ideal.

Discover Boating says these are the best starter boats for families:

## BOWRIDERS

If joyrides across the lake or bay, towing water toys, swimming at the beach, and

generally kicking back on the water sounds like good times to you and your kids, a bowrider may be your perfect choice.

Bowriders are one of the most popular family boats, thanks to their high versatility, copious seating, and easy access to the water.

Bowriders are available in a vast range of sizes that match just about every budget, from small 16-foot runabouts to 30-plus-footers with every comfort feature imaginable ranging from enclosed head compartments (full bathrooms) to complete outdoor kitchens (though we call them galleys, on a boat). And while they may not be the ideal platform for activities like fishing or overnighting, bowriders can be used just about any waterborne activity you can dream up.

## CABIN CRUISERS

Cabin cruisers are larger than many other boats and can cost quite a bit more. Still, they also expand your abilities to include adventures like visiting distant ports, weekendening aboard, or even taking

a family vacation on the water. They’re more or less like having a mobile home that floats, and most come with everything you need for adventures that last days at a time.

## FISH-AND-SKI BOATS

Fish-and-ski boats are designed to be just what their name infers. They have all the essential accouterments you need to chase those finned critters in the morning, then enjoy water skiing, wakeboarding, and similar watersports in the afternoon.

Most have a layout similar to that of a bowrider, but with the addition of fishy features like livewells, rod holders, and an electric trolling motor, plus tow-sports goodies like a ski-tow pylon and ski lockers.

Although some trade-offs must be made for a boat to be designed for multipurpose use (that livewell could be a drink cooler on a dedicated watersports boat, and that bow seating might be a casting deck on a boat meant purely for fishing). But on the whole, the fish-and-ski is perfect for families that

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## The Breeze

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**above:** Choosing the right boat for your family will require some research. Before you buy, consider how your family will use the boat.

STOCK PHOTO *The Breeze*

**on the cover:** People enjoy a late afternoon summer day on the shore of Lake Como.

HEIDI SCHULZ *The Breeze*

want to participate in both activities.

### JET BOATS

Though the range of available choices is a bit less expansive when it comes to jet boats, and jet propulsion tends to be slightly less efficient than more traditional choices, they have one perk that many family boaters love: there's no propeller.

Propeller injuries are exceedingly uncommon in any case, but the mere thought of doing away with the prop and instead propelling the boat with a powerful jet of water gives many parents invaluable peace of mind. Plus, jet boats have excellent handling, minimal draft, and all the other features and accessories found on runabouts.

### PONTOON BOATS

Pontoon boats are incredibly popular, and it's no wonder why: the stable, comfortable platform they provide is ideal for kicking back and lounging on the water. But don't think for a moment that today's pontoons can't be downright thrilling, too.

Many come with potent engines that provide exciting performance and the ability to enjoy watersports. And while they may not be as apt at handling large waves as monohull boats, many of the larger pontoons and "tritoons" (boats with three pontoons instead of just two) are surprisingly capable in choppy waters.

### SAILBOATS

Sailing is, of course, a very different experience than powerboating. Speeds are significantly reduced, and operating a sailboat is far more complex than pressing down a throttle and turning a steering wheel. Yet these "drawbacks" are, in some ways, what makes sailing so appealing – it takes skill and teamwork to sail a boat from

your dock to your destination, and every family member has a role to play.

Plus, modern sailboats are available in all different sizes and comfort levels. Added bonus: since sailboats don't require huge, powerful engines, compared to powerboats on a foot-to-foot basis, they generally cost significantly less.

### WALKAROUNDS

Walkaround boats can be ideal for families that enjoy fishing and day cruising yet also want overnighting abilities. They usually have large, open aft cockpits where you can swing a rod or set a trolling spread, but the bow is enclosed and provides both sleeping accommodations and weather protection.

And while it's true that many types of fishing center consoles may be the most effective design, many angling families with young children – especially those who may go fishing in chilly or rainy conditions – choose walkarounds mainly because of that added protection.

### CONCLUSION

In most cases, one of these seven boats will prove ideal for you and your water-loving family. Of course, there are other, more highly-specialized boats that you may find tempting.

If bass fishing is your true love, bass boats will be impossible to beat. Speed demons will naturally gravitate toward high-performance boats. And if wakesurfing is your sport of choice, then getting a dedicated ski boat/wake boat may be in the future.

But in every case, remember one thing: find a boat that makes you and your loved ones happy, and spending time on the water will draw your family closer together – and that's one thing we can guarantee.

Source: discoverboating.com.



**above:** Pontoon boats are the ultimate family boat. Family members of all ages can enjoy the lake on these watercrafts. **top:** Kids love boating and all the fun it offers, from watersports to jumping in the lake. **at left:** Fishing is a popular activity in the state. Fishing boats offer anglers advantages when out looking for areas where the fish are biting.

STOCK PHOTOS *The Breeze*

# TAKE A lakeside hike

## Traveling the Geneva Lake Shore Path

by Sandra Landen Machaj

CORRESPONDENT

**A**fter several days in the area enjoying a variety of sights and activities, visitors may feel they have experienced all that the area has to offer. They might have enjoyed a boat trip on Geneva Lake, spent a day at Riviera Beach taking in the sun and water, indulged at one or more of the unique restaurants, shopped until they were ready to drop at boutique and specialty stores, and maybe even taken a bike ride, hot air balloon ride, or gone zip lining.

In spite of participating in all these activities, they may have missed one special feature – the Geneva Lake Shore Path.

The popular walking trail borders the entire Geneva Lake, and the trail itself is roughly 26 miles long.

The history of the path goes back to the days of the Indigenous people of several Native American tribes who made their home in this area, including the Potawatomi led by Chief Big Foot.

A plaque placed Lake Geneva's Library Park, which is behind the beach and along the shore, gives a short history of this trail that began many centuries ago.

"The 26-mile lakeside trail along the shore of Geneva Lake was used by several Indian cultures from 2500 BC and continuing to 1836 A.D. Chief Big Foot's Potawatomi tribe walked the trail between their villages at present Fontana, Williams Bay, and one at Lake Geneva located in this park. Later, the trail became the workmen's path from Lake Geneva to the summer estates of wealthy Chicago families," the plaque reads.

These wealthy Chicagoans made their way to the shores of Geneva Lake after the Chicago Fire of 1871, the one that was said to be started by Mrs. O'Leary's cow. At that time the citizens of Chicago looked for an escape for their families, away from the smoke and polluted air of the city as it was rebuilt.

It was to Geneva Lake that they traveled,



where they found the perfect setting to build summer cottages. But unlike the summer cottages most would envision, many were actually mansions, large and elegant, much as their homes in Chicago.

Wives and children would come to the lake for the summer, with the families' servants, while the husbands would commute on the weekends as they continued to work during the week.

Many of these lavish homes can still be found on the shores of Geneva Lake, and they can be seen from a boat on the lake or while walking the Shore Path. Over the years, some of those lavish homes have been torn down and the properties divided into smaller parcels with new buildings. While some may be less impressive than the originals, they are still a sight from the lake or shoreline.

### Public domain

It was the early settlers who deemed that the "20 feet leading to the shoreline be preserved as public domain."

The plan was to keep this historical path for future use in memory of the past and to assure the lakefront would remain accessible for all to enjoy. Each property owner, then and now, is required to maintain the walking path through their property, which has resulted in many sections of the path being unique. Just as each estate has a different look, each owner has provided their own manner of maintaining – and sometimes being creative with – their portion of the path.

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

**above:** This section of the Geneva Lake Shore Path is attractively decorated with greenery. The path, which is about 26 miles long, is often walked in sections.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VISIT LAKE GENEVA *The Breeze*



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**SHORE PATH** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

As one can imagine, not all property owners were pleased to have strangers wandering through their property and some would even try to discourage visitors from traveling across their yard by making their section of the trail narrow, overgrown or not appealing in other ways.

In 1970, the then owners of Stone Manor were sued by the City of Lake Geneva for constructing a fence that blocked the shore path. The city won, the fence came down, the path remained intact.

While walking the entire path in one day is possible if one is in good health and walks regularly, it is said to take eight to 10 hours to complete. By dividing the walk into sections, it can be easier to navigate the length. There are public access points where walkers can join or leave the path however, cutting through owner's lawns from other areas is

not acceptable. Path walkers also are not allowed to sit on the piers, chairs or benches on the property of homeowners as only the actual path is open to the public.

For those who wish to tackle the shore path in shorter stretches, access points to enter and leave the path are available in Lake Geneva, Fontana, Williams Bay, Linn and Big Foot Beach areas. Each one of these sections will provide a comfortable walk without being overwhelming or taking an entire day.

Dan Johnson and his family, of suburban Chicago, were seen doing just that recently.

"We come up several times a year and try to do a section each visit. Someday we hope to be able to walk the entire path in one day," Dan Johnson said with a smile.

"But I think that will have to wait until these kids are a bit older," he



Walking along the path there is always a variety of scenery from different fences to walking surfaces. Each property owner along the path is responsible for providing a walking surface.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF VISIT LAKE GENEVA *The Breeze*

# Music BY THE LAKE

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Saturday, July 29 | 7:30 p.m.

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*Music by the Lake* is presented by George Williams College of Aurora University on its Geneva Lake campus, just seven miles from downtown Lake Geneva in Williams Bay, Wisconsin.

added while pointing to his 7- and 9-year-old children.

If a group only wishes to walk a section of the path and has access to two cars, it's suggested they park one vehicle at each end to avoid having to walk back to the car.

Parking is available at each access point.

The walk from Lake Geneva to Williams Bay is about 7 miles, while a shorter walk from Williams Bay to Fontana covers about 3-1/2 miles.

## Tips for comfort, safety

The shore path is a walking path and not made for bikes, scooters, strollers or wagons. With surfaces that include cement, bricks, wood planks, gravel, stepping stones and narrowing in areas, it's not practical for use by anyone other than walkers. Wearing comfortable walking shoes with non-skid treads is essential for safety especially when the path might be wet and slippery.

Safety is important as some areas of the path are very close to the water and may not have a fence separating walkers from an unexpected swim.

It's recommended that beginning in Library Park and heading either direction on the path is perhaps the easiest portions of it, especially for those who have young children or anyone with mobility issues.

On the other hand, for those who are going to try to walk the entire path in one day, experienced walkers suggest starting at the south end of the lake as that section is known to be more difficult and therefore, best attempted when starting the long walk.

Walking the path is a year-round option but many wonder when it's best enjoyed.

Spring – when the trees are beginning to bud and flowers and greenery are beginning to show? Maybe summer is the time to enjoy

• CONTINUED ON PAGE 8



**left:** Enjoy the view of the Geneva Lake and the blooming flowers along the shore.  
**above:** This is an example of one section of the path that features a variety of plants.  
**top:** Each section of the path is maintained by the owner whose property it travels through.

**SHORE PATH** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

the shore path, when everything is in full bloom? Then there is autumn, with its myriad of colors as the trees turn shades of red, orange, yellow and brown, and the sites of fall can be found all around the lake.

While those three seasons offer a unique view of the path and lakes, winter also gives a breathtaking view of the lake and shoreline. That may not be the best time to try to walk the path as it's not shoveled and can be icy and slippery in many areas. Also, in the off season some of the piers may be stored in a manner, blocking the path, possibly making passage challenging if not impossible.

So, when is the best time to walk the path? Any season, really. In fact, a walk during each one of them will offer a very different take of the lake and homes and landscaping in the area.

While preparing for a walk –as mentioned before – sturdy, comfortable walking shoes are important, but that's not all.

On sunny days, note that a portion of the walk will be in the sun as the entire path is not shaded and there are no public shelters. Remember to wear sunscreen and a hat to protect from sunburn.

There are also no restrooms or food stands on the path. Restrooms are available in areas such as near the public library in Lake Geneva as well as the villages of Williams Bay and Fontana. Carry water or other liquids with to avoid dehydration.

Dogs must remain on a leash and under control the entire time while on the path. Walkers must clean up after the dog and remove the waste from the area. There are no public access garbage bins so whatever you bring in must leave with you.



While making their way along the shore path, walkers will pass many of the large mansions that grace the shore of Geneva Lake, including Stone Manor (above.)

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# How the Geneva Lake Museum came to be

By Sandra Landen Machaj  
CORRESPONDENT

The roots of the Geneva Lake Museum go back to the 1970s, when a group of Lake Geneva history buffs would gather together informally at a local church and share their knowledge of the history of the area.

Helen Brandt was one of those early historians who cherished the history of the Geneva Lake area. Now, 40 years later, Brandt is still actively involved with the museum, having served as curator of the museum since the beginning and continuing to do so today.

“In those early days, we did not foresee that the museum would eventually become a reality,” said Helen Brandt, “but we are pleased that it did and continues to grow.”

It was not until 1983 that the possibility of a home for this Historical Society became a reality.

“The home at 818 Geneva Street was owned by the city, and we applied to use it as a museum,” Brandt said. “It took a while for the plan to be approved by the State Historical Society and when it was, we celebrated.”

The group began the task of displaying the historical artifacts that they had acquired in a tasteful and attractive manner, using several rooms on the first floor as a museum. Eventually, the staff were able to add the upstairs bedrooms for displays, which they filled with a variety of antique toys. In addition, Charlotte Best Peterson – a local artist – developed some brochures about the new museum to encourage visitors.

“The museum officially opened to the public on May 25, 1984. We were open only on weekends from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.,” said Brandt. “In those early days, there were no charges to visit the museum, but there was a tip jar at the entrance.”

The tip jar, Brandt said, is the same one that is present at the museum today. The single dollar bills dropped into the jar – or occasionally a \$5 bill – helped to pay expenses in the early days. The city, too, provided a small supplement. Fortunately, the expenses were kept low. To supplement the income,



Welcome to Main Street at the Geneva Lake Museum. Guests to the museum can relive a bit of history as they journey through Lake Geneva's past.

SUBMITTED PHOTO *The Breeze*

the group engaged in the popular fundraisers of the day, holding either a book sale or a bake sale. But they took it a step further by combining the two and holding a Book and Bake Sale on the front lawn of the museum. They were pleased that their sale was so successful and they earned \$475 the first year.

It was in the house that they began the “Sundays at 2” program with some of the early speakers including the director of Yerkes Observatory, a diver and a collector of barbed wire.

## NEEDING MORE SPACE

Just as houses become overfilled as people live in them, soon the Geneva Lake Area Museum of History was facing the

same problem. More artifacts were collected and needed to be put on display.

“We began to look for the possibility of a new home,” said Brandt. “We first looked at the space that had been the Christmas Memory Shop, which was then owned by the city of Lake Geneva. It was larger than our current space and older with a hole in the roof. We would have also had to update the building to meet ADA accessibility standards.”

While continuing the search, another building became part of the discussion – the Wisconsin Power and Light Building at 255 Mill St.

A short history of the building is posted on the front of it and reads, in part:

“The Lake Geneva Water and Light Company built the original building in 1894 and expanded it in 1929. In 1897, the Haskins Electric Company first generated electricity here and in 1898, the Equitable Light Company was formed, which worked with the Lake Geneva Water Power and Lake Level Co. to provide electricity. In 1915, Equitable became Southern Wisconsin Power and Light Company. In 1998, the City acquired the building and the Museum relocated here in 2004.”

The building, which is as historical as the objects that the museum would be displaying inside, was the perfect place to consider as its next home. Fortunately, the City was willing

to lease it to the Museum for \$1 a year and they would also maintain the exterior.

April 10, 2004, was a day of mixed emotions, as members of the museum said farewell to the place that had been the museum's home. They also realized it was a time of excitement as the museum moved on to bigger quarters. It would be several months before the museum was ready to be opened to the public as volunteers dealt with the need to build the displays.

Those involved also sought ideas and direction on how to turn the building into a home for the museum – a home that would best tell the story of the history of the

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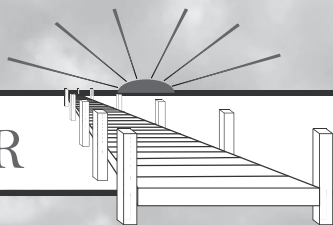
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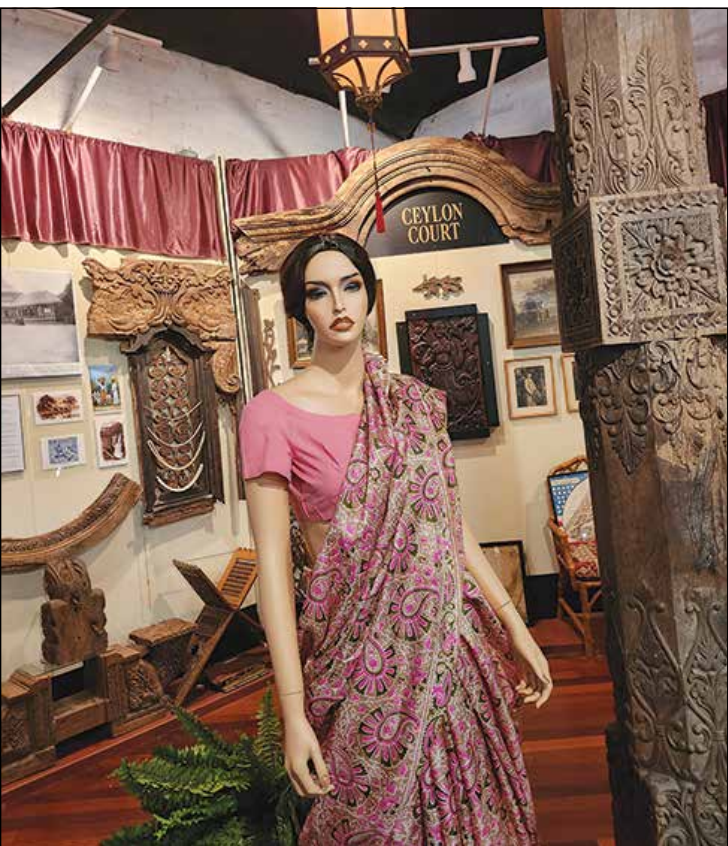
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A favorite display at the museum is that of Ceylon Court from the Chicago Columbian Exposition of 1893. After the exposition ended, it was dismantled and brought to Lake Geneva where it stood on the shore of the lake and was later reconstructed at the museum. The posts on display are the original ones from the exposition.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *The Breeze*

## MUSEUM • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

community.

“We sent two or three members to the Milwaukee Museum for ideas and they were impressed with their display of the streets of Old Milwaukee,” Brandt said.

That was the thought behind the beautiful Main Street built into the Geneva Lake Museum. Visitors are impressed when they enter the museum and see the brick street through the middle and follow the development of Lake Geneva beginning with the first display honoring the Indigenous peoples who made their homes here.

### ON DISPLAY

As visitors move down Main Street, the face of the buildings looks just as Main Street in Lake Geneva looked in the past. That is with good reason, as the building fronts were actual buildings on Main Street. When they were replaced, the originals were brought to the museum and Lakeland Builders of Walworth County repurposed them as the face of Main Street. Inside each building front is the re-creation

of a room displaying the antique items that have been collected over the years. While many museums keep their displays behind ropes, at Geneva Lake Museum, visitors are free to walk through the rooms.

One of the more unique rooms is the kitchen, which contains two kitchens from different centuries in one space. On one side is an 1880’s kitchen with its wood-burning stove, while the other side of the wall is a 1920’s stove and a 1927 General Electric refrigerator with a condenser on the top.

One side of the street in the museum is devoted to private homes, the other gives homage to farms, industries and businesses of the past. The most recent addition is Vern’s Barber Shop, in memory of a past docent named Vern who for years suggested that a barber shop be added.

With each visit to the museum, there will likely be displays that have been missed on previous visits or that are new. There never seems to be a time when the board is not developing a new exhibit.

In the past few years, they



**upper photo:** This is the main entrance to the Geneva Lake Museum, which is at 255 Mill Street. The building was formerly Wisconsin Power and Light and was built in 1894. The museum made it their home in 2004. **above:** Museum President Ed Schwinn and Museum Director of Administration Janette Ewing stand in front of the new Vern’s Barber Shop display at the museum.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *The Breeze*

have opened the Map Room – with its display of maps of the lake over many years, and; a Northwestern Military Academy display – honoring that institution which stood on the shores of Geneva Lake from 1915 to 1995. This display had special meaning for Janet Ewing, Director of Administration, as her father was a graduate of the school.

While “Sundays at 2” presentations did not continue

at the museum, “Tuesdays at 2” stepped in. Today, the events are held on the first Tuesday of the month with a variety of presenters and historical topics.

Brandt presented the 40-year history of the museum at the “Tuesday at 2” program in May. After her presentation, City of Lake Geneva Mayor Charlene Klein presented a certificate of recognition to Brandt for her work and a certificate to the museum for

40 years preserving history.

“The museum for 40 years has been a gem for the city. Helen, too, is our gem,” Ed Schwinn, president of the museum, said.

Museum staff are in the process of working on a display to honor Gary Gygax, and the game Dungeons and Dragons, which he created in Lake Geneva. This impressive room with an original

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**MUSEUM** • CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

game table and beautifully stained glass windows is a work of art that they hope to complete this year.

**HOW TO HELP**

The museum is raising funds to install a lift to make entrance to both levels accessible to all. The five-step stairway between the Main Street and North Gallery requires those who cannot climb the stairs to go outside and re-enter. On rainy or very cold days, it's not a comfortable way to view the entire museum. With the addition of this lift, it will make the entire museum accessible for all visitors.

The funding goal is \$50,000 and donations are currently being accepted. To contribute, send a donation by check or credit card to Geneva Lake Museum, 255 Mill Street, Lake Geneva, WI, 53147.

The Geneva Lake Museum features interesting and educational history of the area. As it celebrates its 40th anniversary,

it is time to visit if you have not done so.

Entry to the museum is \$12 for adults; children 12 and younger are free with a parent; seniors 60 and older pay \$10; students ages 13 to 17 are \$5. Active military in uniform or with ID are free. Memberships to the museum are also available.

"I am very proud to serve as president of this organization," Schwinn, who has served as president for the past five years, said. "When I see the number of people – from individual families to school classes – visiting the museum and realize the number of people we are educating, it makes all the work of the employees and volunteers worthwhile."

A free parking lot is located behind the museum on Mill Street. Summer hours are Monday through Saturday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sunday from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

The gift shop on site has photos of Geneva Lake, maps, sweatshirts, jewelry, magnets and more.



Known as the New England Clinker from around the 1890s, this boat was often used for a young man to take his love out for a ride on the water.

SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *The Breeze*

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