

## FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

While we may be in our off season, and not open to the public, there is still plenty going on at MHS. Being closed is the perfect time to do the inventory of our collection. We are busy with event scheduling and planning, working on merchandise items for a retail space, purchasing office equipment to be more self-sufficient, and creating a part-time staff position which will hopefully help alleviate a few day to day items off of the Board's busy schedules.

In this newsletter you will see articles on a few things I touched on. We are expanding on Scottish Heritage Day in April with a few fun added items this year. I will give an update on the inventory project. Finally, you will see an ad for the part-time museum coordinator position. If you know of anyone that might be interested, please send them our way!

They say it takes a village to raise a child. I feel it takes one to operate a small town museum. Our board is one of the hardest working non-profit boards that I have had the pleasure of leading. Everyone knows their strengths and pitches in where their talents are most needed. We could not do everything we do without a single one of them!

As always, thank you for supporting the McGregor Historical Society and the McGregor Museum. Enjoy the latest edition of the MHS newsletter!

- Patti Ruff

## We're hiring!

The McGregor Historical Society is seeking a Museum Coordinator to manage daily operations at the McGregor Historical Museum in McGregor, Iowa. This seasonal, part-time contracted role involves engaging with visitors, organizing volunteers, assisting with marketing, social media, and fundraising, and supporting museum events and outreach.

If you have a passion for history and community engagement with experience working with people and marketing, we'd love to hear from you!

For the full job description and qualifications, visit [mcgregormuseum.org](http://mcgregormuseum.org). To apply, submit your application, resume, and cover letter to [mcgregorhistoricalsociety@gmail.com](mailto:mcgregorhistoricalsociety@gmail.com).



Volunteer Linda Miller inventorying a large wooden bowl.

## Inventory Project Underway

The inventory project has begun! Angela Stanford with Advanced Museum Services was here the week of Monday January 20th through Friday January 25th kicking off the project. She held training for our volunteers who were in attendance and via zoom for board members who could not attend in person. The training covered proper handling of artifacts and how to work in the inventory software database, Past Perfect. The UMGC grant of \$15,000 will allow Angela to continue to be at the museum for 2 days a week every other week approximately until May.

Our volunteers are a great asset and fast learners of the process. Board members Bonnie James, Dale Crozier, and Patti Ruff have been pitching in. Linda Miller, Pam Smalley, and Sheila Oberreuter are a fantastic help. We have made it through a handful of cases. The process is slow and one has to be meticulous to make sure the information on the accession sheets matches the object while making sure the updates to the database are entered correctly. Overall, the project is going well. By the end of February 300 objects had been inventoried and 150 hours of volunteer hours clocked.

Not only does doing an inventory determine what objects you have in your collection and what to highlight or focus on, but it also lets you look at items you may want to remove

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# UPCOMING EVENTS

**Friday, Apr. 4 to Sunday, Apr. 7**  
Traders Jubilee, Backwoods Events Center

**Saturday, Apr. 5 | 2 pm–6 pm**  
Scottish Heritage Day, Jades River Queen

**Sunday, Apr. 19 | 10:30 am–12 pm**  
Easter Egg Hunt, Great River Care Center

**Thursday, Apr. 24 to Sunday, Apr. 27**  
North Clayton City-Wide Garage Sales, McGregor, Marquette, and Monona

**Friday, Apr. 25 | 11 am–3 pm**  
Lend A Hand Recruitment Fair, Marquette Community Center

**Saturday, May 10 | 9 am–12 pm**  
Mimosas with Mom, Backwoods Events Center

**Monday, May 26 | 10 am**  
McGregor Memorial Day Parade followed by ceremony at Pleasant Grove Cemetery

**Saturday, Jun 21 | 11 am–3 pm**  
Community Picnic, Turner Park

**Saturday, Jun 28 | 12 pm–5 pm**  
Lazy River Beer & Wine Fest, Riverfront Park

For more events, go to:  
**[portsofdiscovery.com/upcoming-events](http://portsofdiscovery.com/upcoming-events)**

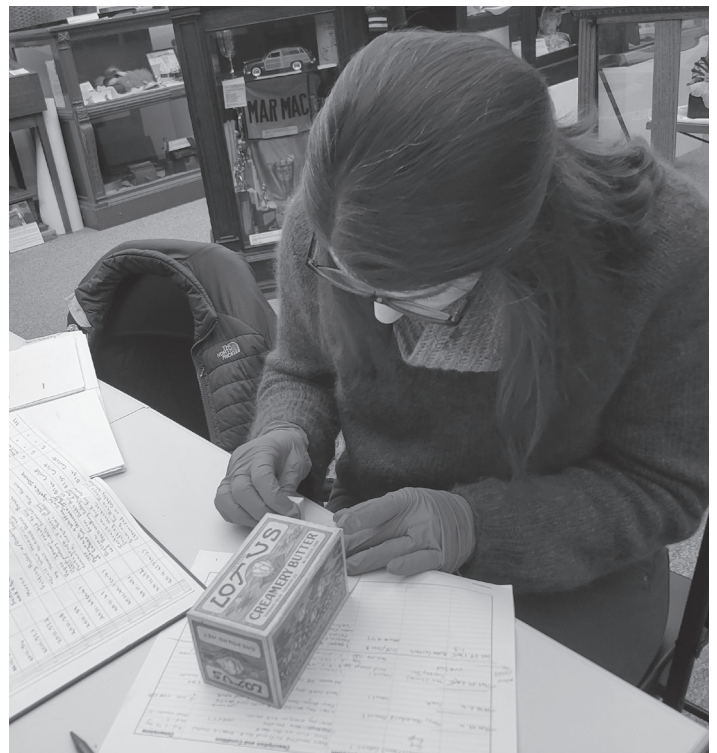
## Inventory project continued from page 1

from the collection, or deaccession. Deaccession does not necessarily mean completely get rid of. Many times these are items that do not have any special connection to McGregor or our history, however they are still important pieces to help illustrate the historical time period.

These particular objects may be duplicate items which we may only need one. These deaccessioned items might be the display cases. If a display case is part of the collection it means it should not be touched by the public on a daily basis. This is not our intent, and a display case will get deaccessioned for more practical but important purposes. It is up to the entire Board to determine which artifacts will be deaccessioned. A collections policy has been drafted with protocols on how the board must act ethically and legally when working with the collection itself.

There will be updates in future newsletter showcasing the progress.

(Right) Sheila Oberreuterr cataloging packaging for Lotus butter. (Below) Water quality testing equipment used and donated by the McGregor Utilities.







A series of eight paranormal walking tours were held over four nights around Halloween. The sold-out events showcased the history and ghostly activity of downtown McGregor, and attendees learned details about how Adrian Lee and his team collected their paranormal evidence.

## Paranormal events successful in 'Mysterious McGregor'

Visitors flocked to “Mysterious McGregor” this fall and winter for a series of paranormal events hosted by the McGregor Historical Society, in partnership with paranormal investigator, psychic and author Adrian Lee and his “Unscripted Paranormal” team.

Lee and the production team investigated around a dozen locations, mostly in downtown McGregor, over multiple days in the summer.

“The investigations went remarkable. There was so much activity in every building,” Lee told the Times-Register newspaper. “When you investigate a town that old, there’s always going to be stuff in every building. Wherever humanity leaves its footprints, paranormal activity follows.”

The content was presented during eight 90-minute-long walking tours over four nights around Halloween. The sold-out events showcased the history and ghostly activity of

downtown McGregor, and attendees learned details about how Lee and his team collected their paranormal evidence. Lee set the scene dressed as a Victorian gentleman, while carrying a lantern along McGregor’s darkened streets.

Highlights ranged from Mississippi River pirates and their leader, Doc Bell, to the Ringling Brothers and poet E. Leslie Spaulding, who perished in a fire at the Past 100 Years antique shop building.

One visitor called the tour “a perfect mix of Halloween and history!”

Attendees were also among the first to snag a copy of the accompanying “Mysterious McGregor” book, written by Lee. It’s available now at shops in town and online.

“You can read the history I’ve uncovered of the town. You can read the paranormal activity with all the evidence and all  
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the photographs,” Lee said. “It gives you directions of where to go so you can actually use it as a guide book to walk up and down Main Street and look at the locations yourself.”

On Jan. 9, Lee and his team unveiled the first of seven “Unscripted Paranormal” TV episodes focused on McGregor. There wasn’t a seat to be had at Backwoods Bar and Grill for the premiere event, where attendees were introduced to the series and McGregor’s river pirates.

Subsequent episodes, some of which are still in post-production, will highlight poet Spaulding, as well as investigations at the American and Ryan Houses. Others will touch on the caves behind those buildings, along with discoveries at The Left Bank Shop and Gallery and a home owned by Deb Scott.

“It’s a really good overview of the town and aspects of history,” Lee said.

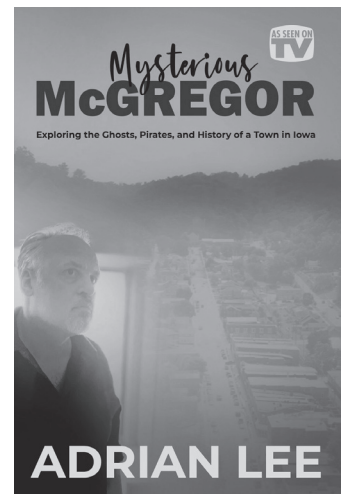
According to Lee, the team is still determining on which streaming platform the McGregor episodes will air. He’s excited for audiences to see them, calling it some of the best filming he’s done.

Lee’s paranormal activities in McGregor don’t end there. Later in January, he led a sold out “Ghost Hunting 101” workshop at the McGregor Historical Museum. He’s also partnered with The Left Bank to offer a series of classes on psychic development, crystals and grounding and tarot reading.

This summer, Lee will return to McGregor for more walking tours. They will be held one evening per month, on the fourth or fifth Saturday, from May through September. Follow the McGregor Historical Museum Facebook page for more details as summer approaches.



(Top) Adrian Lee, Steve Thaumert and Scott Kenner provided some great insight into the filming and production process at the premiere of the first Unscripted Paranormal McGregor episode. (Right) Adrian Lee’s “Mysterious McGregor” book is available now at shops in McGregor and online.



## McGregor’s Scottish Heritage Day

Join us for an afternoon celebrating McGregor’s Scottish heritage on Saturday April 5th with food, music, and tradition! Enjoy Scottish food tastings and whisky samples starting at 2 pm (while supplies last). Then, catch live music by “**Hup, Caledonia!**” from 3–5 pm at Jade’s River Queen.

Don’t forget to visit the McGregor Historical Museum, open from 11 am–3 pm for a deeper look into our rich history.

**Slàinte Mhath!**

For more details, visit our Facebook page or website.

**“Hup, Caledonia!”** is a traditional music group based out of the Whitewater, Wisconsin area focusing on the music of Scotland. Made up of Celtic musicians Andreas Transø, Alerdale Wimer, and Patrick Moran, **“Hup, Caledonia!”** celebrates Scottish heritage through feisty dance tunes, broad ballads sung in the old style, rousing toasts and jokes, and music ranging from standards from the likes of Burns and Tannahill to contemporary Scottish songwriters like Karine Polwart, Dick Gaughan, and Kris Drever.



# The Legacy of McGregor Pharmacy: Over 150 Years of Service

For over 150 years, McGregor Pharmacy at 230 Main Street in McGregor was a cornerstone of the town, its longest-established business at one continuous location. Established in 1872, the pharmacy had seven different owners over its 150-year history. Each owner contributed to the pharmacy's long-standing presence in the community while upholding its values of service and care.

## Founding and Early Years (1872-1911)

On May 15, 1872, Samuel J. Peterson founded Peterson Drug Store at 230 Main Street. Soon after, he partnered with Joseph Ramage, renaming the firm Peterson & Ramage Drug. After Ramage died in 1876, Peterson continued operating the business until February 1911, when he sold it to Charles Kramer.

## Transitions and Growth (1911-1966)

Kramer renamed the business Kramer Drug and managed it until 1919 when A.J. Cords became a partner, re-branding the pharmacy as Kramer-Cords Drug. After Kramer died in 1926, Cords took over sole ownership. In 1966, Cords sold the pharmacy to Floyd Wagner, who renamed it McGregor Drug and Gift.

## Brummel Era, Achievements, and Long-Time Employees (1976-2013)

On May 24, 1976, Larry and Maria Brummel purchased McGregor Drug and Gift and renamed it McGregor Pharmacy. In January 1980, McGregor Pharmacy made history when Larry Brummel dispensed the store's one-millionth new prescription, which went to Vergean Schmidt of Farmersburg.

In 2003, the Iowa Department of Economic Development recognized McGregor Pharmacy as a "Century Business." Larry and Maria Brummel accepted the award in Des Moines, celebrating the pharmacy's longstanding contribution to the community.

## Ownership Change and Community Impact (2013-2024)

After 37 years of ownership, Larry and Maria Brummel sold McGregor Pharmacy to Dennis Alcorn on June 1, 2013. Alcorn had worked at the pharmacy for eight years and committed himself to preserving the personalized service that set McGregor Pharmacy apart from corporate chains.

The pharmacy's iconic mortar and pestle sign was destroyed in the July 2017 tornado. Alcorn oversaw the installation of a replacement in the summer of 2019.

## Closure (2024)

In November, 2024, McGregor Pharmacy announced its impending closure on December 8, 2024. In a letter to customers, the pharmacy cited challenges that made it difficult to remain in business. Clayton Drug in Elkader agreed to maintain patient prescriptions and records.

For over a century and a half, McGregor Pharmacy served as a trusted institution for generations of families. From its early days as Peterson & Ramage Drug to its final years under Dennis Alcorn, the business stood as a pillar of the community.



McGregor Historical Society  
P.O. Box 426  
McGregor, IA 52157

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## 2025 SPRING MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

The McGregor Historical Society's Museum offers a glimpse of McGregor's history through its collections and exhibits. Over the years exhibits have changed, students have visited, community groups have used the space for conversations and lectures, and visitors have enjoyed our collections to view McGregor's unique history through an experience toward understanding where we've been.

Your \$25 McGregor Historical Society annual membership includes subscription to the newsletter and an invitation to the Annual Picnic. We hope you will join us through your membership support.

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### Member Information (Please Print)

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

\$25 Annual Membership    Additional gift \$ \_\_\_\_\_    Total: \$ \_\_\_\_\_

My Gift is In Honor of: \_\_\_\_\_

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Check Enclosed

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at P.O. Box 426, McGregor, IA 52157**

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