

Museum Notes

for the week of July 12 – 18, 2026

by Kristen Parrott, curator

What is America? Our commemoration of the U.S. 250th continues with a talk on this subject and on "The Idea of America and the Constitutional Debates". Professor Daniel Kapust of UW Madison will present this program on Tuesday, July 21, at 6PM, at the Vernon County Museum and History Center.

Daniel Kapust teaches political science and has published widely on ancient, early modern, and modern political thought. He is interested in rhetoric, theories of liberty, American exceptionalism, imperialism, the Federalist/Anti-Federalist debates, and related topics.

The program will ask, What is America? This question was one of the central issues in the debates over the ratification of the Constitution. The Constitution was written in 1787, ratified in 1788, and has been in operation since 1789. Federalists and Anti-Federalists argued not just about whether to adopt the new Constitution, but what America was and what it might be.

Everyone is welcome to attend. Programs are held in the first-floor, wheelchair-accessible, air-conditioned conference room. Attendees are asked for a donation of \$2.50 each to help cover our costs.

This presentation comes to us courtesy of Badger Talks, through the University of Wisconsin. Badger Talks reflects the tradition of the Wisconsin Idea — to extend the resources of the university to citizens of the state. Over 300 Badger Talks are hosted around the state each year, featuring faculty and staff with expertise in a variety of disciplines.

Thank you to everyone who attended our public reading of the Declaration of Independence, and to our 12 wonderful readers. We were so fortunate to be able to finish this outdoor event before the rain began. If you missed it, you can watch a recording on the Vernon County Historical Society's youtube channel.

Our last grill-out of the summer will be held on Saturday, July 25, from 10AM to 2PM, outside Nelson Agri-Center in Viroqua. Bratwurst and hotdogs will be for sale, with all proceeds going to help preserve and promote our shared local history.