



Cornerstones December 2020

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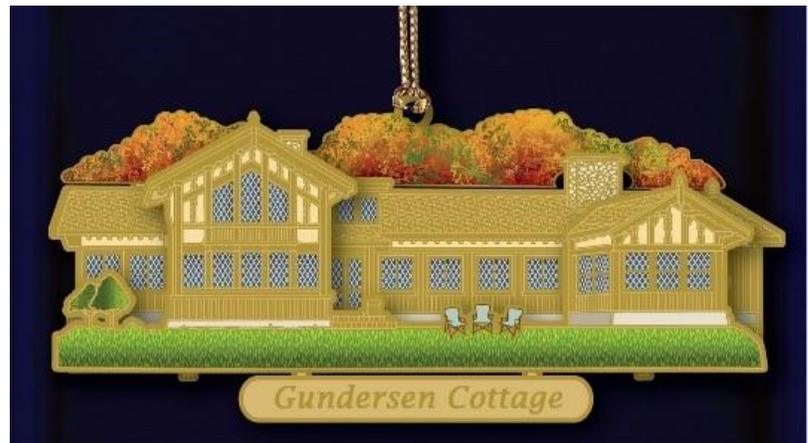
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*Treasures of La Crosse  
2020*



*Gundersen Cottage*

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## **A Message from the President of PAL**

Hi members and friends of PAL! Wow, it has been a long and crazy year! Like everyone else, the Covid-19 pandemic has hit PAL, and we've had to adjust like so many other non-profits have done this year. Our board of directors has been meeting since March in an online-only format. Though Candy, our awesome office manager, has continued to work in our office on the mezzanine of the Pump House, the building itself has had limited hours. We have had to cancel so many of our regular events, such as our spring historic downtown walking tour, the Heritage Awards Banquet, and our Winter Party will also very likely be cancelled this year. We have not been able to host any educational talks or home tours this year due to social distancing and safety purposes. We will be discussing what 2021 events we might try to work toward.

So, though it sounds like we haven't been very active, that is not true! We've done what we could this year! We are continuing with some regular projects as well as a few new ideas. For example, we have our NEW holiday ornament which is now available by mail order and at several local retailers. They will be available to purchase online, or if you are doing some in-person shopping, many of our regular sales venues in downtown La Crosse and elsewhere around the city will have the ornaments in stock, too! Our board of directors has been looking at possibly organizing and/or starting a program that would help salvage parts of buildings which are scheduled for demolition, which will hopefully see parts of these buildings become reused and less end up in the landfill. We also continue doing research on a future book about La Crosse architect Otto Merman.

Going forward toward 2021, we welcome your input about projects and programs you would like PAL to work on. Are there any historic properties in our region you feel are threatened? Is there an educational topic you'd like us to host related to historic preservation? Do you have any suggestions on houses you'd like to see on a future historic home tour? Give us your thoughts on what we can do to better serve you, our members, and the greater La Crosse community in our historic preservation efforts.

Stay safe, wear your mask, wash your hands, socially distance, and we will all get through this together! And we plan on seeing you all IN PERSON on the other side!

Barbara Kooiman  
President, Preservation Alliance of La Crosse



Preservation Alliance of La Crosse, Inc. Presents

## 2020 Treasures of La Crosse

This ornament was sponsored by  
Dr. Sigurd III and Jean Ann Gundersen.

The Adolf and Helga Gundersen Cottage, originally dubbed 'Helgaland', was constructed in 1918 on dredged land on the northern tip of Barron Island. This unique example of Scandinavian inspired summer cottages was designed by notable Prairie Style architects Otto A. Merman and Percy D. Bentley. The design also shows a strong influence of the Arts and Crafts Movement.

Notable features include leaded glass diamond pattern windows, two cross-gable wings which house the living room at one end, and kitchen/dining room at the other end, vertical log timbers topped with scroll sawn wood trim and stucco panels, intricate curving shapes, carved rafters, alternating spindles and flat posts with decorative scalloped bargeboards, two massive split boulder chimneys, and dragon-headed forms which frame the entry.



The interior architecture of the cottage is Scandinavian themed with a 1½ story ceiling supported by large timber trusses and a massive tapered stone fireplace and chimney. The balcony has an open wood railing supported by 9 wood beams.

The ends of these beams feature hand carved whimsical human faces produced by Rudolph Blatter, a Swiss woodcarver working with the Hackner Altar Co. of La Crosse.



The dining room has stenciled friezes and another stone fireplace with a brick hearth and wrought ironwork. Traditional Scandinavian patterns of vines, dragons, gnomes, chains, and geometric shapes are stenciled on molding and spaces between beams. Interior wooden doors are set in Tudor arches. Photos of the Cottage can be seen at [www.preservationalliance.com](http://www.preservationalliance.com). Also, you can read the National Register Historical nomination for an interesting description of this unique property.





<p><b><u>Ornament Mail Order Form</u></b></p> <p>2020 Gundersen Cottage _____ @ \$25.00          2019 Magill Bank _____ @ \$25.00          2018 Cargill Pettibone _____ @ \$25.00          2017 Public Library _____ @ \$25.00          2016 Pearl Street West _____ @ \$25.00          2015 Band Shell _____ @ \$20.00          2014 #4000 at Grand Crossing _____ @ \$20.00          2013 Mississippi River _____ @ \$20.00          2011 Grandad Bluff _____ @ \$20.00          2009 The Martindale House _____ @ \$20.00          2008 Holy Trinity Church _____ @ \$20.00          2007 The Pump House _____ @ \$20.00          2006 King Gambrinus _____ @ \$20.00          2002 Pettibone Beach House _____ @ \$20.00          2001 The Ott House _____ @ \$15.00  <b><u>Shipping and Handling for 1</u></b> _____ @ <b><u>\$5.00</u></b>  <b><u>\$1.00 for each additional</u></b> _____ @ <b><u>\$1.00</u></b>  <b><u>Total</u></b> \$ _____</p>	<p><b><u>Checks Payable to PAL</u></b>  <b><u>Or</u></b>  <b><u>For Credit Card Users:</u></b></p> <p>Visa, Mastercard, Discover, Am. Express</p> <p>Card Number _____</p> <p>Expiration Date _____ / _____</p> <p>3 Digit Security Code _____</p> <p>Name as on Card _____</p>
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## A Historic Garage In Its Own Right (Part 1) by David Riel

In May of 2019, PAL presented Travis Tippery and Amy Mader with an award for their extensive preservation work on the Ranum-Nelson House, located at 1132 Rose Street. Built ca. 1915 for businessman Bert Nelson and wife Blanche (Ranum) it's one of only a few Prairie Style homes located on the North Side of La Crosse.

After finishing the majority of work on the house, their next task was to improve the garage. The single-car garage was old and lacked the historic character of the house. The garage was in

such disrepair that a squirrel named Frank had been living inside it. Travis and Amy decided to kick Frank out, and build a new garage that better reflected the character of the house. Designing their own garage would allow them to add space for two vehicles and a gas-heated workshop.



Amy's father Gary Mader attended the PAL Awards Ceremony, and was thrilled to see Travis and Amy win an award. He also knew they were planning to build a larger, wood frame garage with a pebble-dash stucco exterior, a time consuming, labor intensive project.

Gary and his brother Steve own Crest Precast Inc., a local concrete manufacturer whose

company roots go back to the Mader Brick Co. of the 1800's. Gary was *so* inspired by the PAL Awards Ceremony, he told Amy he wanted to contribute. Gary said Crest could easily produce concrete panels that mimic the pebble-dash stucco of the house, saving Travis and Amy a lot of time and energy.

Even though Travis and Amy planned on building the garage by themselves, working with Crest was a great idea. Crest Draftsman Kevin Thicke made architectural renderings based on Travis and Amy's input, and Amy's brother Lee Mader supervised the pouring of the concrete panels.



To differentiate the modern garage from the historic house, they created a horizontal band of pebble-dash on the walls, a unique design that pays homage to Prairie Style motifs.

Travis and Amy didn't realize that their new garage would be historic in its own right. When they went to City Hall for a building permit, inspectors informed them that the garage, with its 10-foot-tall, 7-inch-thick panels weighing about 10,000 pounds each, would be the first residential garage in La Crosse made from precast, concrete panels.

As such, city engineers had serious concerns about the safety of a residential structure like this, and they weren't quite sure what standard they should use to evaluate it, as it had no precedent in La Crosse history. They requested that Crest engineers conduct wind velocity tests to ensure the garage wouldn't

collapse. Crest had to hire an engineering firm in Chicago to conduct the wind velocity tests, and after many emails, Crest convinced the city to grant a building permit. The standards used to evaluate this garage will be used for any similar residential concrete structure built in the future. We will update their progress in future editions of the newsletter!



## Welcome to the PAL Board, David Riel

David Riel moved to La Crosse with his wife Tiffany in 2012. Originally from Worcester, MA, David received a BFA in Illustration from the Massachusetts College of Art in Boston. He worked in Boston for several years creating illustrations, website design, animation, and storyboard art for a variety of clients. After moving to La Crosse, David and Tiffany purchased their first home on Caledonia Street in 2014.

Researching and nominating their home to be a Local Historic Landmark led to David joining the Heritage Preservation Commission, which he has served on for more than two years. After experiencing his first Torchlight Parade, David also designed the 2017 Oktoberfest Button. When he's not working on his 104-year-old home or researching North Side architecture, he's studying new disciplines including screen printing and leaded glass window construction.

PAL is now registered with AmazonSmile. Remember us while doing your shopping!



Keep track of all PAL events and announcements by following us on Facebook!



You can also find photos of past awards recipients, past newsletters, and additional information about PAL at our website:

[www.preservation-alliance.org](http://www.preservation-alliance.org)



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