

# The Tribune-Democrat



## Portage event to highlight wedding fashions, customs

By **KELLY URBAN**

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— The Portage Area Historical Society will present the history of saying “I Do” when it hosts “Wedding Belles – Wedding Fashions and Customs from 1770 to 1900” at 2 p.m. Sunday at the Portage Station Museum. Irene Huschak, a historical society board member, said the idea for the wedding-theme fashion show came from previous shows.

“Last year, we did a show of fashions of the 1980s,” said Huschak. “We do these shows to bring people into the museum.”

Peggy Field, an Altoona resident and a national expert on period clothing, will narrate the program and discuss the changes in wedding fashions and customs throughout the ages.

Topics will focus on wedding dresses and how cakes, veils, honeymoons and other customs evolved.

The wedding dresses will be modeled by Blair County Historical Society women, who do two other shows in addition to Wedding Belles.

“Peggy Fields makes the dresses that the women will be wearing,” Huschak said.

Local residents have loaned several wedding dresses, dating back to the 1930s, that will be on display.

Huschak said that the discussion will look at wedding styles and customs prior to the 20th century.

She noted that at the time women had little prospect of any career, and preparing for a successful marriage was an important part of every girl’s education.

Huschak pointed out that during the 1850s, white wedding gowns appeared in fashion magazines, but only the wealthy could afford such an extravagance.

By the 1890s, the middle class had adapted the tradition of a special wedding dress to be worn once and then preserved.

Less-well-off brides would have a special gown made and wear the outfit as their “best dress” for many years.

“We hope to continue with fashion shows because it brings a lot of people into the museum,” said Huschak. “We want to show people the history of the area and what people wore.”

Admission to the show is free. Refreshments will be served.

Kelly Urban can be reached at 532-5050 or [kurban@tribdem.com](mailto:kurban@tribdem.com).

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