



South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Avenue, 53172

NEWSLETTER

APRIL, 1997

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Secretary	Dolores Kowalski	762-4231
Treasurer	Ferdinand Brutvan	762-2073
Past President	Lois Schreiter	762-5214
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Eunice Hahn	1997	764-3689
Mary Magnuson	1997	762-9428

Mary Magnuson is Sunshine Chairperson. If any members are ill, contact Mary.



FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Annual Dinner was a smashing success. Thanks to everyone who attended. An enjoyable time was had by all! Thank yous to Jewel Heise and Addie Becker serving as the reception committee. Gertrude Endthoff and Dolores Kowalski for donating the raffle items and Fred Brutvan for reservations. State Senator Richard Grobschmidt and Mayor Dave Kiech addressed the membership. Former Mayor Chester Grobschmidt talked about the 25th anniversary of the South Milwaukee Historical Society and reminisced about Tony Kochi. Lois and Steve Schreiter presented slides about their trip to Israel, Jordan, Turkey and Greece. It was an entertaining and enjoyable presentation! Just around the corner is our Pot Luck Supper at the First Congregational Church at 5:30 PM on May 5. Hope to see you at the Business and Industry Fair at S.M. High School on Friday, April 4th, 5 to 9:30 PM and Saturday, April 5th 9AM-2PM. Hope everyone had a Blessed Easter and is enjoying spring!

Dean Marlowe, Jr., President

BADGERS HOMES FOUND AT POTOSI

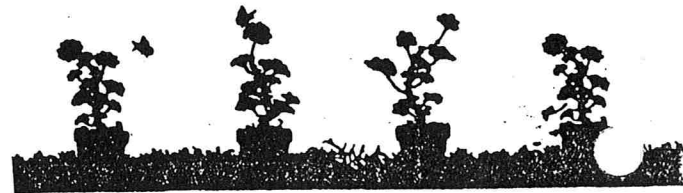
After 20 years of paperwork and research the site of 2 "badger" lead mining houses have been added to the National Register of Historic Places. The Potosi Historical Society developed a path to allow visitors to see how early lead miner settlers built a four foot wall and covered the top with logs or tree limbs and dug into the earth to burrow in like badgers for sleeping. These 1830 dwellings were discovered by Laverne Ihm in the early 1970's. Take Highway 133 in Grant County, about 10 miles west of Platteville at the foot of the Great River Road. When you reach Potosi take Main Street to St. John Mine.

LITTLE THINGS

Little drops of water,
Little grains of sand,
Make the mighty ocean
And the pleasant land.

Thus the little minutes,
Humble though they be,
Make the mighty ages
Of eternity.

Julia A. Fletcher



**DUES ARE DUE IN
JANUARY. THANK YOU
FOR YOUR SUPPORT.**

Senior, \$4.00, Single, \$5.00,
Family, \$6.00, Life, \$100.00.
Donations welcome.
Mail to Membership
Chairperson Addie Becker,
526 Sycamore Ave., South
Milwaukee, WI 53172
(414)762-2073

Modem inventor G. David Forney received the \$100,000. Marconi International Fellowship award in January, 1997. In 1970 he invented a 9600 bit modem that cost \$11,000. Today's modem can communicate as fast as 56 kbit a second over the phone lines and sells in the neighborhood of \$200. for your home computer. Forney says his biggest surprise so far is that he never foresaw this technology entering the home. (Picture in Electronic Engineering Times Jan. 27, 1997)

Mr. Forney makes it possible for me to write a letter on our computer and a few seconds later it is deposited in the computer mail boxes of my adult children in Los Angeles, Seattle and Raleigh.

CURATOR'S CORNER

by GERTRUDE ENDTHOFF

A Centennial Committee of South Milwaukee has been formed to plan events and work with community organizations to celebrate this special time in our history.

The Committee hopes this will be a year long celebration beginning with a kick off on June 1, 1997 at City Hall. During the Centennial year, events have been planned to encourage South Milwaukee residents to discover more about the history of our community, develop a stronger sense of community and to promote the City of South Milwaukee and its heritage.

The Committee has determined that each month of our year long celebration be dedicated to a special and specific theme. The current list of themes is as follows:

- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| 1.) Political History Month | June, 1997 |
| 2.) Heritage/Cultural History Month | July, 1997 |
| 3.) City/Government Services History Month | August, 1997 |
| 4.) Family History Month | September, 1997 |
| 5.) Civic and Fraternal History Month | October, 1997 |
| 6.) Architectural Month | November, 1997 |
| 7.) Old-Fashioned Christmas Month | December, 1997 |
| 8.) Citizen Recognition Month | January, 1998 |
| 9.) School History Month | February, 1998 |
| 10.) Church History Month | March, 1998 |
| 11.) Business/Industry History Month | April, 1998 |
| 12.) Veterans History/Recreation Month | May, 1998 |



GIFT ITEMS FOR SALE:



"Historic Quilt Story" stories are now available for a donation of \$1.50. Mail orders \$2.00

Stories about the quilt will be discontinued in this news letter.

"Remember When" has been redone on a computer and is available for \$1.00. Mail orders \$1.50. This is a wonderful card to send for birthdays and holidays.

Book: SOUTH MILWAUKEE THEN TO NOW is still only \$7.50. Mail orders \$9.00. This is a great gift for graduations or holidays. It comes autographed by the author and is a hard bound edition.

Note cards are 10/ \$4.00 Great for wedding thank you cards.

Post cards 12/ \$1.50

Mugs are \$4.00 or mailed \$6.00. Mugs have a picture of Grant Park's seven bridges entrance on both sides in sepia.

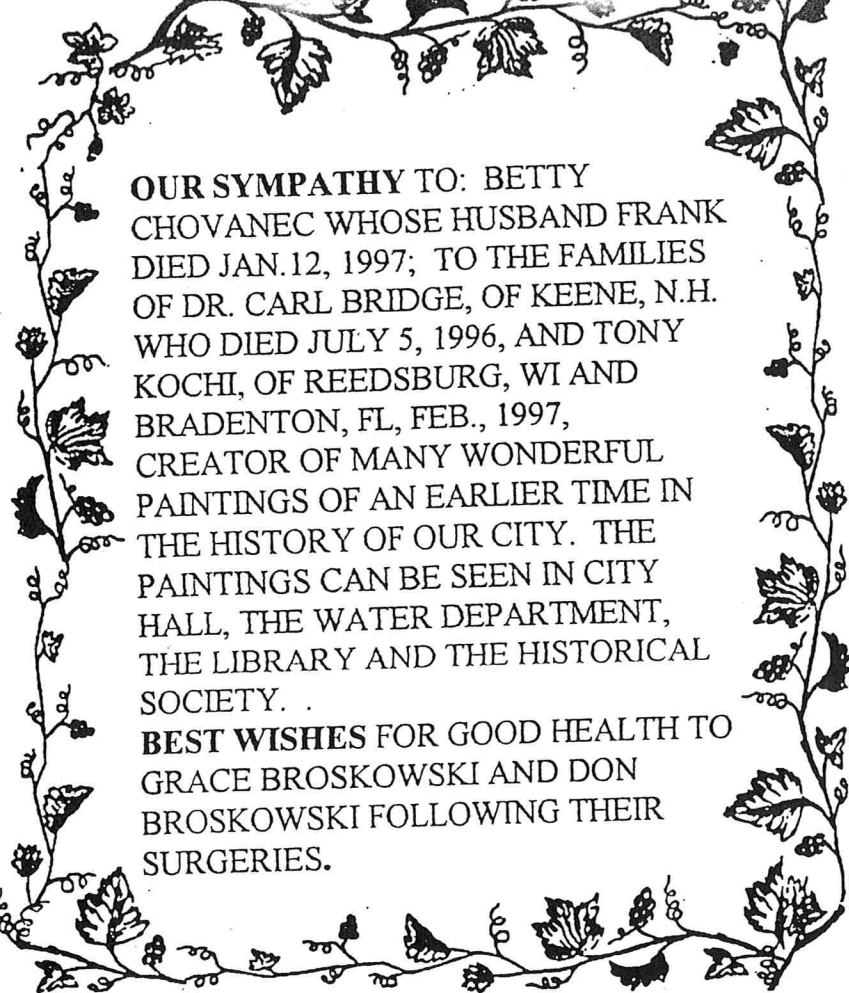
Centennial Pewter spoons (dated 1897-1997) \$6.00

Sweat Shirts SMHS logo in gold on dark green shirt sizes s-xlg are \$15.00 prepaid xxlg = \$16.00 xxxlg = \$17.00

T- Shirts SMHS logo in white on red shirt sizes s-xlg are \$10.95 prepaid xxlg = \$11.95 xxxlg = \$12.95

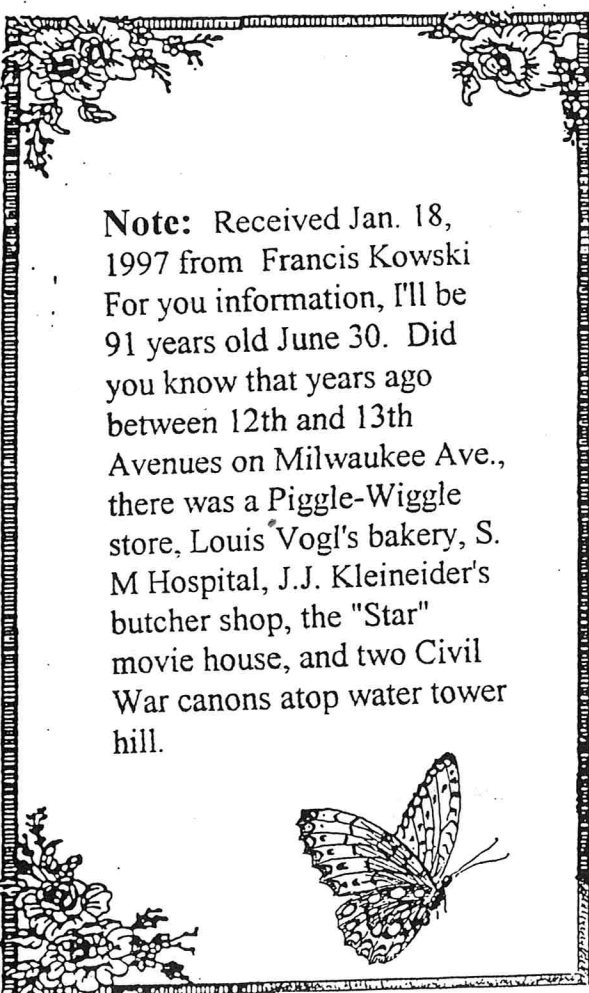
Send your orders, with your name, address, zip code, size and check to SMHS

Treasurer, Fred Brutvan, 729 Monroe Ave., South Milwaukee, 53172



OUR SYMPATHY TO: BETTY CHOVANEC WHOSE HUSBAND FRANK DIED JAN. 12, 1997; TO THE FAMILIES OF DR. CARL BRIDGE, OF KEENE, N.H. WHO DIED JULY 5, 1996, AND TONY KOCHI, OF REEDSBURG, WI AND BRADENTON, FL, FEB., 1997, CREATOR OF MANY WONDERFUL PAINTINGS OF AN EARLIER TIME IN THE HISTORY OF OUR CITY. THE PAINTINGS CAN BE SEEN IN CITY HALL, THE WATER DEPARTMENT, THE LIBRARY AND THE HISTORICAL SOCIETY.

BEST WISHES FOR GOOD HEALTH TO GRACE BROSKOWSKI AND DON BROSKOWSKI FOLLOWING THEIR SURGERIES.



Note: Received Jan. 18, 1997 from Francis Kowski For you information, I'll be 91 years old June 30. Did you know that years ago between 12th and 13th Avenues on Milwaukee Ave., there was a Piggie-Wiggle store, Louis Vogl's bakery, S. M Hospital, J.J. Kleineider's butcher shop, the "Star" movie house, and two Civil War canons atop water tower hill.



1997 Calendar of Events

Correction -- September Pot Luck will be held on Sept. 8th at 5:30 PM First Congregational Church, 1111 N. Chicago Ave.

LAWSON AIRPLANE FACTORY

Florence Roth Johnson, 1976

May 8, 1921, was an important date in my young life as well as in the life of our town, South Milwaukee, Wis. It was on that date that the Lawson airplane took off on its maiden flight.

Alfred W. Lawson, promoter, aviation pioneer and founder of the Lawsonian religious movement, was the owner of the Lawson Airplane factory, located at the foot of Menomonee Ave., on Ninth Ave. Many South Milwaukeeans, including my Aunt Rose, had invested heavily in this company and tension was high as they waited for the initial run.

This plane was the largest air liner in the world at that time and was built during 1920 and 1921. The double decked ship was made to carry 34 passengers and was built especially for night service, having berths and toilet and shower facilities. The cabin was 68 feet long and the wings had a spread of 124 feet. Motors of 420 horsepower each supplied the power.

For many days prior to the take off day, the plane could be seen taxiing up and down in front of the factory. Each day, the townspeople would wonder --is today the day?

We lived in an upper flat, across the street from the large empty field in front of the factory. We had a large porch at the front of our house, and from up there we had a clear view of all that went on at the airplane factory. (continued)

LAWSON AIRPLANE

This fateful morning, my father, George Roth, woke me up very early and said I was to get up and get dressed. He said it looked like the airplane was going to fly. I couldn't even imagine what it would look like to have that huge piece of machinery flying in the air.

Mother, dad and I quickly got dressed and went out on to our porch. As we watched, the plane started to move--slowly down the runway which ran south from the factory--then gradually picking up more speed. It was slow to rise, and the runway was too short for the large, heavy plane, so before it had gained enough altitude, a house loomed a few hundred feet ahead.

The pilot, Clarence H. Wilcox, switched his course and tried to go between a large elm tree and a telephone pole, but he grazed the tree and struck the pole. He pancaked the plane to a landing about 500 feet short of the high bank of Lake Michigan.

As soon as it became evident that the plane was going to crash, my father, along with all the rest of the people who had gathered to witness this great event, started running to the crash site.

No one was hurt, and Mr. Lawson himself stepped from the plane and calmly ordered coffee and doughnuts and talked of rebuilding the plane.

Oscar Lindquist, one of South Milwaukee's photographers, was soon at the scene of the crash and took pictures of the wreck, which were later sold to the public. Pieces of the plane were taken from the wreckage by souvenir hunters. My father brought home a piece of the propeller, which was a conversation piece for many years.

Lawson's talk of rebuilding was only a pipe dream and the company never recovered from the financial loss of the

crack up. The local investors lost all they had put into it. If the flight would have been successful, who knows? South Milwaukee might have been the seat of an airplane industry.

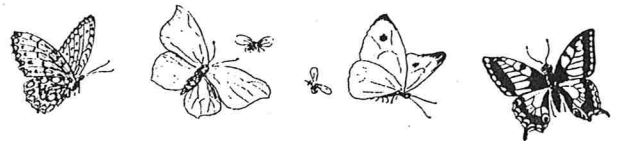
Lawson left the city and went to Washington where he started a movement called the Lawsonian religion. He had many followers and wrote numerous books and articles on the movement.

He had come from Green Bay, Wis. and settled in this vicinity in 1917 and had built an airplane to carry 18 passengers. Its flight to Washington attracted national attention, and on the strength of this flight, he was awarded the first air mail contract in 1920 for three air mail routes. It was after this that he conceived the plane which was to be the downfall of the company.

His death, which came at the age of 85 on November 29, 1954, was kept quiet, because Lawson had predicted that he would live to be 200 years old by applying Lawsonpoise, a balanced life to defeat the "suctions" and "pressures" which, according to Lawson, continually kept on building up and tearing down man and everything else in sight.

For the past 27 years I have lived only a block from the site of that original airplane factory, and I think of that exciting day often.

Florence Roth Johnson, 1976



**WELCOME LIFE
MEMBER:**

RUTH LEWIS



PRINTER?????

Do you find it amazing that the city can spend \$20,000 on staffing the Community Center, but the SMHS can't get \$225.00 for a printer?? Any size donation is welcome.



South Milwaukee Historical
Society
717 Milwaukee Avenue
South Milwaukee, WI 53172



**WANTED--JELLY JARS
WITH COVERS -- Call
Jewell Heise, 762-4650**

DEPOSIT grocery receipts
from Piggly Wiggly into
Historical Society slot at
store.

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