



South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Avenue
South Milwaukee, WI 53172

NEWSLETTER January 2007

OFFICERS

President	Dean S, Marlowe, Jr.	768-8790
V. President	Addie Becker	764-2118
Secretary	Lois Schreiter	762-5214
Treasurer	Theresa Aghbashian	762-5623
Past President	J.B. Bulley	762-7605
Curator	Dean Marlowe, Jr	768-8790

BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Term Expires)

Jewell Heise	2008	762-4650
Barb Mueller	2008	762-2712
Eunice Hahn	2007	764-3689
Delores Kowalski	2007	762-4231
Betty Chovanec	2006	762-3428
Cecelia Pomahac	2006	768-0167
Barb Mueller is Sunshine Chairperson	762-2712	



Dates to Remember: February 10, 2007 Annual Dinner, see President's letter

Greetings from the President's desk!

The Society has begun raffling off a kids' chopper bike as a fundraiser for the Society. Additional prizes include \$50 gas cards. Tickets are \$2 each, or 3 for \$5. Thank you to Judy Soulak for printing the tickets at no cost to the society! Please help support your society by buying/selling raffle tickets. The Board has decided to choose the winning raffle tickets at our May Pot Luck Supper; you need not be present to win!

At the request of the Board of Directors, I sent letters in support of a movement to save the historic buildings at the Soldiers Home Memorial Historic District at the VA Medical Center in Milwaukee from being converted into condominiums. Thanks to Mary Nelson of the South Milwaukee Historical Preservation Commission for organizing the movement to continue to honor our Veterans and save the buildings and grounds.

Thanks go to Jonalee Merkel, a UW-Madison student who, in December, published a paper analyzing the influence of ethnic groups on South Milwaukee's social history (1893-Present). Her paper will be on the website soon. Jonalee worked many hours at the Museum and the South Milwaukee Public Library doing research on this subject.

In October, the Board appointed me Curator/Historian for the Society, effective December 2, 2006. Please look for my reports in the future "Curator's Corner" section of the newsletter regarding my progress. I have sent letters to all South Milwaukee Elementary School Principals, to arrange tours for all Fourth Grade students.

Thanks again go to Joe and Judy Soulak who graciously donated their time and talents to print the Society's new and improved informational flyer. The colors have changed to ivory and burgundy, the colors of our welcome sign at the museum. Thanks also go to Jewell Heise for distributing the flyers throughout South Milwaukee.

Look for additional changes to our website. The Digital Library project done by UW-Milwaukee Graduate Student, Lynda Citro has been completed. Please take a virtual tour of our Museum, view the digital library and other additions to the site. Thanks go Lynda and her Professor, Iris Xie of the UW-Milwaukee College of Information Sciences for coordinating these additions. You will also notice that additional items will be imaged and placed on the website, giving everyone the opportunity to view the documents and pictures contained in our archives, not otherwise available to the public. Also new in 2007, a President's Report and Curator's Report have been added to the website, so everyone can keep track of the happenings of the Society.

FOUNDED MARCH 1972 BY MR. AND MRS. DENNIS RANKIN

INITIAL DIRECTORS — DENNIS RANKIN • PENNY RANKIN • GEORGE HOOK • MARY McCARRIER • BRUCE RAYESKE
DORA LEE SZEWCZUGA • WILLIAM DOMOE • LILLIAN DISHONG • CHESTER GROBSCHMIDT

Please plan to attend our Annual Dinner at Papa Luigi's (Formerly the SM Community Center) on February 10; Lynda Citro will be presenting her Digital Library Master's Project. Cost is \$17 for a Chicken Dinner with Potato, Vegetables and Dessert. Our Pot Luck Supper will be held in May, at the First Congregational Church; Officers and Board members will be elected. In accordance with the By-Laws of the Society, all present officers cannot serve a third consecutive term in their position. My personal thanks go to all officers who served their two terms in office. It has been a pleasure to serve as your President; much has been accomplished over the last two years.

May everyone have a Blessed and Prosperous New Year.

Historically Yours,
Dean Marlowe, Jr., President

Museum Visitations:

Call Dean Marlow, Jr. allow 45 minutes. The South Milwaukee Historical Society Museum is open Sundays, Memorial Day to Labor Day, 2 to 4 PM and by appointment. Visitors, school groups, scouts, families, clubs and individuals are welcome. Your support of our Historical Society is appreciated.

Mark you calendar for the South Milwaukee Historical Society's annual dinner on February 10, 2007 at Salvatore's/Papa Luigi, 1919 12th Avenue in South Milwaukee. Cocktails are at 5:30 PM, Dinner at 6:30 PM consisting of baked chicken with salad, baked potato, and green beans almondine, dessert and coffee. Cost \$17.00 per person. For additional information or to make a reservation, contact Addie Becker, 414 764-2118. The evening program will be provided by Lynda Citro, a masters program student at UW-Milwaukee in Information Technology. She has been photographing and digitizing the library, documents, pictures, card catalog and is making an audio-video of the museum, maps and hyper links. She is a former SM resident.

Raffle Tickets for a "Kid's Chopper Bike and 2- \$50.00 gas cards are on sale for \$2.00 each or 3 for \$5.00, the drawing for the raffle prizes will be May 14, 2007 at the Pot Luck Supper at the First Congregational Church. Raffle tickets will be available at the February 10 Historical Society Dinner or call Theresa at 414 762 5623 or Cele at 414 768 0167.

The Historical Society is giving some consideration to turning the Lincoln Library area into a research center. We have an outstanding collection of books on President Lincoln and feel the collection would be better suited to another venue where it would get more exposure. The books could be moved to the South Milwaukee Library or the Newberry Research Library in Chicago. Both will be contacted to see if there would be an interest in housing this collection. The Lincoln Library was donated to the society by Dr. Harold Hein. We will need to attempt to locate Dr. Hein's daughters for their input and recommendations. Any member with information on how we could get in touch with the Hein family should contact Lois Schreiter at 414 762 5214 or send information to the museum, 717 Milwaukee Ave. South Milwaukee, WI 53172

The South Milwaukee Historical Society is seeking nominations for the 2007-08 term for the offices of president, vice president and secretary. The positions are for a one year term with re-election for another year. Any member interested in holding one of the offices is asked to contact the membership committee Barb Mueller, 762-2712; Cele Pomahac, 768 0167 or Eunice Hahn 764 3689.

Genealogy by Steve Schreiter: Steve has graciously offered to do one hour of genealogy for anyone with the new \$10.00 membership dues. Basic information forms must be filled out and returned to Addie Becker with dues. Forms may be obtained from Addie Becker (see membership form) and also on the Internet at www.ci.south-milwaukee.wi.us

Inventory of Museum and updating the new 30 page docent tour book is done. Lois Schreiter compiled the list of these artifacts with the help of Steve Schreiter, Barbara Mueller, Richard Raatz, Theresa Aghbashian, Addie Becker, Jewell Heise, Betty Chovanec and Eunice Hahn. Without their help it could not have been done. Lois Schreiter, Curator, (Sept to Dec., 2006)

Anyone with information about Midwest Pottery is asked to call, write or email Lois or Steve Schreiter -414 762-5214, sfs@execpc.com, 104 Brookdale Drive. SM., 53172

Historic Preservation in South Milwaukee Wisconsin

Thanks to former mayor Chet Grobschmidt, whose foresight resulted in an ordinance creating the Historic Preservation Commission of the Common Council of the City of South Milwaukee. This commission consists of 7 volunteer members who are appointed for terms of 1 to 3 years. They have no budget but may request funds from the common council as needed. One of the Councils aldermen is always a member of the Commission; today that member is Alderman Mike McCarthy. The Commission is currently led by its chairman Mr. Nels Monson. Mr. Monson was recently contacted and asked about historic preservation in our city and the activities of the Commission.

Interviewer: Does our City have any buildings or locations worthy of preservation?

Mr. Monson: Here in south Milwaukee we are very fortunate that we still have a number of buildings that I think have good historical value for the community. We've been losing a few over the past few years but there are several left that may be saved.

Interviewer: Are there any buildings or sites that are being preserved?

Mr. Monson: In South Milwaukee we have 3 properties on the National Register of Historic Places. That's the railroad depot, the post office and the Lawson /Continental Buildings. So those have national designation. There are some Milwaukee County Landmarks to. Two of the three properties have recently been given local historic designation by the South Milwaukee Historic Preservation Commission. That happened in 2006 The railroad depot and the post office have been given local designation.

Interviewer: What is the depot used for now?

Mr. Monson: Currently the depot is the building offices of Benkowski Builders, Incorporated. The current owner of the business is Jay Benkowski, whose father purchased the building in 1978 and saved it from the wrecking ball. That building is on the National Register of Historic Places. He's done a great job on that property. That's an example of what I'd like to see done with more buildings in South Milwaukee, to fix up our old buildings. One thing about that building, a portion of it is the offices of Benkowski Builders where Mr. Benkowski conducts his business, but he does have a section of it that is preserved, where you walk into the building, its the waiting area of the passenger station. It is used but there is a space that you can appreciate.

Interviewer: What is the situation regarding the Lawson/Continental buildings?

Mr. Monson: The Lawson/Continental building is the property of the City of South Milwaukee. We are currently trying to work out a way to save the building. The tenant should be moving in the next several months. And after that's done we are going to have to come up with a plan. I'm not sure what the city has in mind but I hope the Historic Preservation Commission can help in preserving that building. It is a National Register Landmark and there is quite a history behind that building. I think that building is very important for future generations of South Milwaukeeans. So they can appreciate the contributions of people like Alfred Lawson. We were fortunate to have him in our community. I want that story to be told for years to come and not just knocked down.

Interviewer: A lot of people know about Lawson but what's Continental?

Mr. Monson: Continental Faience and Tile Company was one of a number of ceramic tile companies popular in the 20's thru the 50's. Continental Tile was well renown among tile enthusiasts who are very interested in what's going on relative to the factory building, especially the tile showroom and president's office, both of which are intact and beautifully tiled. We have some supporters in Arizona who have researched the company and its employees. They have been a great help in this process.

Note – The Lawson/Continental building is located at 909 Menominee Ave, at the corner of 9th and Menominee. It is sometimes referred to as the 'Pottery Building' because it was used by Midwest Pottery Company from 1944 to 1950.

Interviewer: Many people think that because a property is on the National Register it's automatically going to be preserved. Is that true?

Mr. Monson: Well just because it's on the National Register of Historic Places doesn't mean it has any level of protection from demolition if the owner wants to knock it down. There are some procedural statutes that must be met but if the owner of the property wants to knock it down, there is nothing to prevent him from doing it.

Our thanks to Mr. Nels Monson for taking the time to meet with us and talk about the Historic Preservation Commission. All interested in history and the City of South Milwaukee are indebted to him and the commission for their efforts in preserving our past. Mr. Monson gave many more interesting insights to the Commission and its work that may be the subject of a future article. *Images of America, South Milwaukee*, a picture history book is for sale at the SM Historical Society. Authors are Nels Monson and Dean S. Marlow, Jr. \$19.99.

South Milwaukee Historical Society Membership form: 2007

Name: _____ Date: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ State _____ Zip _____

Telephone Number: _____

Type of membership: _____ amount: _____

Form of payment: cash _____ check _____

Annual Dinner February 10, at Salvatore's, 5:30 cash bar, 6:30 dinner \$17.00 per person _____

Dues: Single, \$10.00; Family, \$15.00; Life, \$100.00; Business, \$25.00;

Make checks payable to South Milwaukee Historical Society. Send membership dues and dinner reservations to Membership Chairperson, Addie Becker, 526 Sycamore Ave., South Milwaukee, WI 53172 (414) 764-2118.

The South Milwaukee Historical Society would like to extend our wishes, condolences or congratulations to its members. If you know of someone who should be remembered, please contact Sunshine Chairperson Barbara Mueller, 762-2712. If you leave a message, please indicate if the card should be sent to their home, hospital or nursing home. The name of the hospital or nursing home would also be appreciated.

Jewell Heise has been doing Fund Raising for the Historical Society for many years. She works with Piggly Wiggly Grocery receipts and makes great strawberry rhubarb jam. She needs your Piggly Wiggly receipts and clean Jelly Jars with covers. Call Jewell at 762-4650.

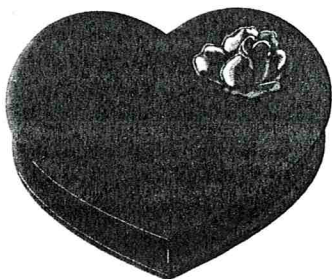
Newsletter published quarterly in Jan., Apr., July, and Nov.

News Editor and printing: Lois L. Schreiter

Labels by Stephen F. Schreiter

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

Thank you for
your support in
time and \$.



SMHS Board