

South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Ave

South Milwaukee, Wi. 53172

P R E S E R V I N G T H E P R O U D P A S T

**FOUNDED
MARCH
1972**

Founders

- Dennis Rankin
- Penny Rankin

Initial Directors:

- George Hook
- Mary McCarrier
- Bruce Rayeske
- Dora Lee Szewczuga
- William Domoe
- Lillian Dishong
- Chester Grobschmidt

OFFICERS:		
PRESIDENT	ROBERT PFEIFFER	764-1135
V. PRESIDENT	LOIS SCHREITER	762-5214
SECRETARY	SUE ZIAREK	520-1959
TREASURER	RICHARD RAATZ	761-3941
BOARD OF CURATORS		
	JUDY BALESTREIRI	
	RICHARD THINNES	
	STEVE SCHREITER, GENEALOGY	
BOARD OF DIRECTORS (TERM EXPIRES):		
ESTELLE HAACK	(2011)	762-8124
CAROL BRABY	(2012)	870-7857
ADDIE BECKER	(2013)	764-2118
JB BULLEY	(2013)	762-7605
BARBARA SCHOUTEN	(2013)	764-2315
BARB MUELLER	(2013)	762-2712
SUNSHINE CHAIRPERSON		



HONORARY BOARD MEMBER
BETTY CHOVAINEC

F R O M T H E P R E S I D E N T ' S D E S K

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I hope everyone had a great holiday. I just saw a sign that said "only 56 days to Spring". Time to think about gardening and vacations! Speaking of gardening, if you or someone you know has a garden they might want to show off please contact Lois Schreiter at 762-5214. She's working on the 4th Annual Garden tour this coming June.

I do hope that you will be able to join us for our annual dinner at Pat's Oak Manor on Saturday, February 11. The Society is celebrating its 40th Anniversary this year! All the details are on Page 6.

If you or someone you know has some interesting stories about the early history of South Milwaukee and the surrounding area, we would like to invite you to our monthly membership meeting at the South Milwaukee Public Library, the second Monday of each month at 6 pm, so you can share your stories with the group.

Our museum needs some work done on the bathroom as a result of a water leak. If you would like to make a monetary donation to the Historical Society we would greatly appreciate it. We are a 501 C 3 so donations are tax deductible and every little bit helps.

See you on February 11th!!

Bob Pfeiffer

P.S. From the Editor/Secretary:

Help?? Do you have a memory of South Milwaukee you'd be willing to share with our readers? How about an interesting picture of a place or event from our city's past that we could use. Maybe you'd like to try your hand at writing a short article for the newsletter? Give me a call or drop me a line. I'd love to hear from you. And, as always....If you'd like to sign up for the electronic newsletter just send an email to sziarek@wi.rr.com and I'll add you to the list.

Sue Ziarek

I REMEMBER.....

BY: CHUCK BAUMBACH

Chuck joined the Historical Society last January and emailed this memory (from sunny California) shortly after the Groundhog Day Blizzard in February 2011.

RECORD BLIZZARD OF 1947:

My recollection (from age 13) is that the storm dumped 24 to 28 inches in a day or two. (The internet says about 18" but the internet must be wrong.) The whole metropolitan area was paralyzed and it took South Milwaukee a day or two to get most streets minimally functional. Cudahy, Town of Lake (unincorporated then) and Milwaukee were slower—as much as a week before we could get to Milwaukee.

As drifting and blowing snow overwhelmed puny human counter-efforts, trucks, autos and at least several buses got stuck at random and had to be abandoned. Everyone helped everyone. People were taken into homes for shelter and fed whenever there was need. Bus drivers, unable to get home were taken into private homes. But even when their buses were freed they couldn't get to Milwaukee so they drove the usual routes within SM, over and over, maybe for 16 hours a day—and grew beards. I think paying bus fares was optional but I bet most were happy to do so. Formal stops and routes became a bit informal. Local fuel suppliers kept the busses going on credit (or maybe for free). Everyone supported and cheered those intrepid drivers and had their pictures taken with them. And their beards! Before those drivers were finally able to get back to Milwaukee I think they were able to get to Carrollville for awhile and even service that route.

During the first night of the storm there was a big important power-failure at one of the factories in Carrollville and an electrician was needed. There were no ski-mobiles then and nothing was getting through anywhere. The snowdrifts were four to six feet deep! Luckily there was some military installation still there from WWII. Somehow they were able to send a tank down 5th Avenue to South Milwaukee, get an electrician and carry him back to Carrollville where he repaired the problems.

I lived east of 5th Avenue up a long hill beyond the "Barrel Factory". There the drifts were deepest. Having heard the tank story on the radio I went the next morning to 5th Av about a block west of our house. Without snowshoes the going was tough but somehow I got there. I expected to see a plowed lane, like the Seabees did in the Pacific to make roads and airfields with dozer blades attached to tanks. But no! Amazingly it looked like the tank floated on the top of the drifts and the tracks were less than a foot deep. At least that's my memory—and it must be correct because I was so surprised that I inspected them carefully and predicted it would take weeks to dig that road out.

When the road was opened later, just wide enough for two lanes, the side banks were straight vertical and at least head high with no way to escape if a car came and you were below the bank. For the rest of the winter we had to walk on the top of the bank at least to Marion Av where sidewalks and urban lots and houses started. It was particularly treacherous wherever someone had shoveled out an access to the side and pedestrians had to climb down and up again to proceed. Luckily there were only three or four places like that. And it was always a unique feeling to have cars whizzing by your side with their roofs near or even below our feet.

I recall feeling a lot of pride that independent South Milwaukee was one of the first, maybe *THE* first city in the area to be plowed out and functional—not that it mattered much except locally since you couldn't get to any other towns, including Milwaukee!

Remember when . . .



... winter in Milwaukee meant blizzards and snow?

Few people are complaining this winter about the lack of opportunities to run the snowblower, or exercise with a shovel. And there's good reason. Every veteran of Milwaukee winters can remember heavy snow storms, and many still recall the granddaddy of them all — the blizzard of '47. On Jan. 29, 1947, the weatherman predicted some nasty weather, and less than 48 hours later Milwaukee was buried under 18.1 inches of snow. Many people were stranded Downtown as street-

cars, buses, trucks, automobiles — even snowplows — stalled awkwardly in drifts and were abandoned. All hotel rooms were occupied, and cots were set up in lobbies. When the storm ended snow removal began, a job that took more than a month. The photograph shows W. Kilbourn Ave., looking west from the Republican House, as the cleanup work started.

Picture and information from the Milwaukee Public Library local history collection.

I couldn't find a local picture to include but I recently ran across this clipping from an old Milwaukee Journal Green Sheet (remember them??) while sorting thru a box of my late mothers things. Seemed appropriate to include it.

Dear Friends,

For about a year the County, SEWRPC, the DNR, MMSD and the City of South Milwaukee have been meeting to discuss flooding problems in the Oak Creek Watershed. The pond and dam were not deemed to be a flood control issue, but nevertheless they concluded the following:

"Mill Pond

Milwaukee County and WDNR will perform a joint inspection of the Millpond dam and the County will work with WDNR to assess the maintenance needs of the dam. That assessment will be followed by a joint City/County/WDNR effort to initiate a discussion regarding options for the dam and the Mill Pond."

I have been advised that the only remaining arguments that can save the dam are letters and emails from individuals and organizations to Supervisor Jursik and the Mayor of South Milwaukee pointing out the historic and cultural value of the dam to the City of South Milwaukee. You might also mention the undesirable effects of allowing the fish to move upstream in the creek. They cannot reproduce in the creek, but they will die after spawning and smell pretty bad in residential areas.

Supervisor Pat Jursik (Patricia.Jursik@milwcnty.com)
Courthouse Rm. 201
901 9th Street
Milwaukee, WI 53233

Mayor Tom Zepecki
2424 15th Avenue
South Milwaukee, WI 53172

I urge you to tell your friends and to write letters and emails to Supervisor Jursik and the Mayor supporting the dam. If you want to save the dam and pond, this is your chance. Possibly the last chance.

Don Bulley
Friends of the Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse



Photo courtesy of
Jennifer Stolpa

The Fifth Annual Holiday Christmas Tea

The Grant Park Clubhouse was beautifully decorated by members of the Friends of the Mill Pond. It was the perfect setting for our tea!

Photos Courtesy of Rita Wiskowski



Students from the South Milwaukee High School National Honor Society helped with serving. Their smiling faces, enthusiasm and willingness to help were appreciated by all.



The Christmas tree shone with new elegance this year, decorated with ornaments donated by Joseph Balestrieri



Guests enjoyed a beautiful musical interlude presented by Mary Beth and Katherine Garrett



The Bake Sale is always a favorite with guests featuring homemade cookies donated by members of both groups.



Thanks to Bob Morgan from the Friends of the Mill Pond. He was our fire tender, handyman, raffle seller & bartender—serving coffee of course!

PAST EVENTS—CONTINUED

The Fifth Annual Holiday Tea was held on December 10, 2011 at the Grant Park Golf Club House co-sponsored by The Friends of the Mill Pond and the South Milwaukee Historical Society. We would like to thank everyone who attended—
 eighty-eight people this year! We would also like to thank all of the volunteers from both groups and the students from the South Milwaukee High School National Honor Society who put in many hours of work to make this event enjoyable for all our guests. A big thank you also to Milwaukee County for donating golf passes for the raffle and to Rita Wiskowski who donated an Art Museum membership.

Guests enjoyed sandwiches from Charlie's Catering Company, homemade Christmas cookies, mini cupcakes donated by the Milwaukee Cupcake Company & coffee provide by Fixx Coffee House



Lois Schreiter calls out the winning raffle numbers as guests wait in hopeful anticipation. Among the favorite raffle items this year were a mink Teddy Bear donated by Janet Cook, a Waterford crystal bell donated by Vicki Shultz, a quilted purse donated by Judy Evert & a painting by Bill Spaltholz donated by Janet Cook

The Holiday Tea has become a much anticipated social event—a time to gather with friends for an enjoyable afternoon in the historic Grant Park Clubhouse



UPCOMING EVENTS

Historical Society Annual Dinner
Celebrating our 40th Anniversary

Please join us on Saturday, February 11
at Pat's Oak Manor , 1804 15th Avenue in S Milwaukee
Social Hour 5:30-6:30; Dinner at 6:45
Entertainment by Dr. Barbara Groth telling tales of her
Pistol Packing Preacher Grandfather

This year's menu includes:

- Sirloin Beef Tips with noodles and Baked Ham
- Buttered Carrots and Green Beans
- Mashed Potatoes with Gravy and Rosemary Redskin Potatoes
- Italian Noodles, Pasta Salad, Tossed Salad, Veggies & Dip, Jello
Cake & Coffee for dessert

Cost is \$23.00 per person

Please R.S.V.P. by February 6, 2012

Use the membership form below or contact Addie at 414-764-2118



South Milwaukee Historical Society — Preserving the Proud Past

2012 Membership Renewal Form

Please renew my membership at the following level

___ Individual (\$10) ___ Family (\$15) ___ Business (\$25) ___ Individual Life Member(\$100)

Make checks payable to South Milwaukee Historical Society
and mail to Addie Becker, 528 Sycamore Av, South Milwaukee WI 53172

All Payments due by 2/15/2012

If payment is not received by then you will be removed from our mailing list

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Check here if you would like to receive your newsletters by email and write the address below

Email Address: _____

Annual Dinner Reservations: ___ attending @ \$23 each, \$ _____ enclosed

TIDS AND BITS

We're still hoping we can hold a Christmas Tag sale in 2012 but we need your help. Keep us in mind if you're still weeding out your holiday decorations. But *PLEASE*, no broken knick-knacks or strings of lights with missing bulbs or overly weathered outdoor decorations. We're looking for gently used, newer, **quality** items. And how about those Christmas gifts we all get that we can't use like bath salt baskets or candy dishes or candles. You know the ones I mean. Well, we'll take those too! We have room to store things until next year so call Sue at 414-520-1959 or Carol at 414-870-7857 to arrange a drop off or pick up.

We did hold the Bake Sale & Open House on November 19 but turn out was very low. Our thanks to everyone who supported the bake sales thru the years. Your contributions and participation are greatly appreciated.

It's time to renew your membership for 2012.

Remember...If we don't hear from you by the Annual Dinner on February 10 we'll assume you no longer want to be a member and will remove you from our mailing lists. A renewal form can be found on Page 6. And please consider signing up for the electronic version. The less we spend on printing and postage, the more we can put in the newsletters! To sign up, send an email to sziaiek@wi.rr.com So far almost one-third of our members receive the electronic version. Our thanks to all of you.

For those of you who are comfortable with computers, Nancy Dzidzan passed on a link to the Oak Creek Patch, an online newspaper that recently ran a series of articles on Oak Creek Township men who fought in the Civil War written by local historian & book author Tom Mueller. These articles detail the journeys of about 40 soldiers from the Township which included modern day South Milwaukee.

WWW.OAKCREEK.PATCH.COM

Type civil war in the search box to get to the articles

We continue to have some issues at the museum. During a recent wind storm a piece of the siding trim came off. We're in the process of hiring someone to make the repair although the recent return of winter is hampering those efforts a bit. We also had some water damage to the bathroom floor. We've talked with a contractor for ideas about updating that room. While we will never be able to make it handicap accessible, we do hope to make it more 'user-friendly'. Unfortunately work on getting the heating and air conditioning upgrades done have been slow. We are still pursuing them and hope to have some real progress to report before air conditioning season returns.

The lack of decent heating has also hampered the efforts of our curators. But they've made incredible progress in sorting through the museum collections and will keep plugging away at it. If you're interested in giving them a hand please contact Steve Schreiter at 762-5214. New member Tanya Nahaie-Ghanad recently offered to digitally restore at risk documents and photos in our collection. She shared some samples of what she can do at the January member meeting. We were all very impressed by her work and gratefully took her up on the offer to help. We're looking forward to spotlighting some of her restorations in future newsletters.

As always we invite all our members to attend the monthly meetings held the second Monday of each month at the South Milwaukee Library. In December, Frank Gradtke stopped by. He is the current owner of the house at 1212 S Chicago Av, the last intact 3-story Victorian house in South Milwaukee, previously owned by May Thbideaux. He and his wife are working on restoring the house and he was looking for information on how to get it on the National Register of Historic Places. He shared it's history with us and talked about some of the more memorable features. He also extended an invitation to any Society member who would be interested in checking it out.

A reminder that The Historical Society would like to extend our wishes, condolences or congratulations to its members. Please contact sunshine chairperson Barbara Mueller at 762-2712. Be sure to leave a detailed message or a number she can contact you.

COMING EVENTS

Our monthly meetings are now held at the South Milwaukee Library. We'd like to invite ALL our members to attend. As an added incentive, we'll be serving refreshments. **UPCOMING MEETINGS ARE: March 12; April 9; June 11**

Feb 11 Annual Dinner

Pat's Oak Manor, 1804—15th Av in South Milwaukee
Cocktails at 5:30, Dinner at 6:45 (more details inside!)

May 14 Spring Pot Luck Meeting

First Congregational Church, 1111 S Chicago Av in South Milwaukee
Dinner at 5:30. Bring a dish to pass! More Details in the Spring Newsletter

June 30 5th Annual Garden Tour

Watch for details in the Spring Newsletter

Preserving the Proud Past

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MR & MRS STEPHEN SCHREITER L2
104 BROOKDALE DR
SOUTH MILWAUKEE WI 53172



SOUTH MILWAUKEE HISTORICAL SOCIETY
717 MILWAUKEE AV
SOUTH MILWAUKEE WI 53172

35 JAN 2012 2:18 P

