



# South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Avenue  
South Milwaukee, WI 53172

## NEWSLETTER April, 2018

### OFFICERS

President	Todd Michalek	762-6876
V. President	Lois Schreiter	762-5214
Secretary	Sue Ziarek	520-1959
Treasurer	Judy Balestreiri	630-8604

Curators: Judy Balestreiri  
Richard Thinnis  
Stephen Schreiter

### BOARD OF DIRECTORS (Term Expires)

Lee Loveal	2018
Rose Nosacek	2018
Don Bulley	2019
Stephen Schreiter	2019
Vicki Bartoshevich	2020
Carol Novak	2020

Welcome New Members  
Donna Gottwald  
Kathryn De Ridder  
Kris Shell  
Mary Latus

### The President's desk!

Have you had a chance to attend one of the Historical Society's events this summer? On Friday, May 11, 40 people from the surrounding area attended a joint Oak Creek Historical Society/South Milwaukee Historical Society tour of St. Matthew's Little Brick Church (the church can take your breath away in its simple, detailed, picture book country church elegance) with Father Patrick O'Loughlin, Pastor at St. Matthew, followed by a fabulous fish boil, for those who chose to stay for dinner. Maybe you saw the Society at the Downtown Market in June and stopped by to say Hi. Maybe you, and 300+ other garden devotees, had a chance to attend this year's South Milwaukee Historical Society Garden Tour & Art Show. Our Garden Tour Goddess, Patti Bergeson, once again outdid herself. Money was donated by garden tour attendees at Brad McKendry's garden, for the Dementia Society of America, to honor Brad's lovely wife Peggy, who passed away in November, 2017, due to complications of dementia. Did you get to a canopy class yet? So far folks have made Irish Courting Knots by weaving wheat, and 17 folks heard from World War I nurse Caroline Donsing, as portrayed by Anna Passante, who is interred at St. Mark's Episcopal Cemetery on Rawson Avenue. If you haven't made it to a canopy class yet, there's still time to catch a couple in August. You might also want to pour concrete to make decorative stepping stones and bird baths. Don't be a stranger, we would love to see you this summer!

Congratulations to Marina Bernovich for receiving the Society's 2018 Scholarship. Marina will be attending the University of Notre Dame in fall and is planning on majoring in history. Good Luck Marina, we're already proud of you!

Help! If you have any old photos, or stories, of the South Milwaukee Arcade, please give me a call (Home: 414-762-687). Todd is trying to unravel, record, and display more of the history of this South Milwaukee building and business he is proud to own.

For those of you who are adventurous enough to leave the city, on Sunday, August 12, starting at 1:30 p.m., the Oak Creek Historical Society is presenting Mary Todd Lincoln, "Preserve the Union", at their Museum on 15th and Forest Hill, and the St. Francis Historical Society, on August 4, will be hosting a dedication of a Lakeside Power Plant historical marker. There will be an Ice Cream Social at La Finca at 1:00 p.m., with the dedication at the Plant site on Lake Drive and Howard avenues at 2:00 p.m.

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

## **Regional Convention at St. Francis Historical Society**

Nine members of our Society (Todd, Lois, Sue, Judy, Carol N., Don, JB, Carol M and Steve) attended the July 7<sup>th</sup> meeting. After introductions Rick Bernstein spoke briefly on the relationship between the State Society and regional and individual Societies. Mr. Mark Maurice then gave a presentation for the Milwaukee Fund, a charitable fund that has now introduced a new investment for 501c3 organizations that will permit them to initiate a sub-fund with the benefits being returned to the Society.

Following a short break, Anna Passante and Randy Borland then described the St. Francis Society project to reconstruct the records for the Lake Protestant Cemetery in St. Francis. There are no known records for this cemetery. It was originally call the Thompson Cemetery in honor of Jared Thompson an original settler in Lake Township and the donor of the cemetery acreage.

At lunch, an excellent box lunch was provided by the Layton Fruit Market. Lunch was followed by a short business meeting chaired by Mr. John Decker at which our regional representative for the Local History Societies was elected. The St. Francis group had selected 5 different tours for the afternoon, including a session at the cemetery. Mr. Borland then described how the GPR (ground penetrating radar) contractor had surveyed the grounds in 6 ft wide strips and how the cemetery had been originally divided into 20 ft. by 20 ft. square plats. An easel contained a representation of the grounds, the 20 ft. squares and marking denoting the “ finds” made by the GPR operator. Names obtained from obituaries, etc, were also on the document.

### **SMHS Book Review      “Saboteurs” by Michael Dobbs 2005**

Peter Burger was a United States citizen who had come here in 1927, fleeing Germany and sponsored by a relative in Wisconsin. He lived in Oak Creek Township in a rooming house in Carrollville and worked for several years at Bucyrus-Erie as a machinist. .

He returned to Germany in the early 1930's and was recruited by the German Intelligence to return to the United States with 7 other men who had lived in the US , spoke English and could blend in with Americans. He was landed with 3 others on a beach near Amagansett New York (Atlantic side of Long Island, close to its easternmost point.) Submarine U-202 had left Brest Germany on May 27, 1942 and landed the sabotage team on the night of June 12<sup>th</sup>. The second team was landed on a beach in Florida.

The mission was betrayed to the FBI by a member of Burger's team and he also cooperated with the authorities. All 8 members were arrested, 6 sentenced to death and Burger and one other to life imprisonment. Both were deported to Germany in 1948

At his arrest Burger had a leather pocket book inscribed “Bucyrus Erie Company Safety Contest, 1930, “ALWAYS BE CAREFUL”

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**The South Milwaukee Historical Society would like to extend our wishes, condolences or congratulations to its members. Please contact Sunshine Chairperson, Vicki Bartoshevich, 764-2836. 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.**

**Genealogy by Steve Schreiter: One hour of genealogy for anyone with the new \$10.00 membership.** Basic information forms must be filled out and returned with dues to Carol Novak. 1818 Elm Ave. South Milwaukee, WI 53172 Books on Sale at the Museum – First Thursday of Month, 1:00pm to 3:00PM

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## Remembering the History of South Milwaukee

### *Ask Lois...*

Hi Lois, can you tell me what used to be located at 909 Menomonee Avenue in South Milwaukee?  
- Historically Challenged

Dear Historically Challenged,

The following timeline should give you an idea of the types of businesses that were located at this address. Some of these businesses added interesting and diverse chapters to the history of South Milwaukee.

- 1916 - Fisk Rubber Co. builds the original brick structure
- 1919 - Alfred Lawson buys the building to design and assemble a three engine, 36-seat plane
- 1921 - Lawson tries unsuccessfully to fly the airliner from an airstrip he built on the property  
Lawson leaves the building and abandons the project
- 1923 - Continental Faience and Tile Co. buys the building
- 1928 - Continental builds an addition onto the original brick building
- 1940 - Continental goes out of business
- 1943 - Midwest Pottery Co. buys the property
- 1949 - Midwest Pottery builds an addition
- 1970 - D.G. Enterprises acquires the building from Continental Ceramic Co., an affiliate of Midwest Pottery
- 1976 - Joseph L. Price acquires the building from D.G. Enterprises
- 1993 - Southland Lumber Ltd. receives permission to use the building
- 1999 - Dick Schumacher acquires the building for storage space for Ko-op Marine. Schumacher brings on Noel-It All Automotive as a tenant.
- 2004 - The city officially takes ownership of the site using eminent domain
- 2007 - The city relocates Ko-op Marine and Noel-It All Automotive
- June, 2009 - The building is razed

P.S., HC, this is your lucky day. Here is an additional interesting fact about the building, and a fact about a business that used to reside at this address:

- The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places on Monday, September 3, 2001
- On Monday, April 25, 1977 a U.S. federal trademark registration was filed for BIG STINKY by J.L. Price Products, Inc in South Milwaukee

Interested in seeing a BIG STINKY up close, please consider coming to the South Milwaukee Historical Museum on the 1st Thursday of the month from 1:00-3:00 p.m. We've got a BIG STINKY for you to peruse. We'd also love to hear any stories you might have about the history of South Milwaukee. See you at the Museum!

### **Upcoming South Milwaukee Historical Society Events You Might Like to Attend**

Stepping Stones/Bird Baths at the Museum - 9.a.m. to Noon  
Saturday, August 4 - Casting & Sunday, August 5 - Painting  
Cost \$25 - Contact Patti Bergeson to reserve a place: 414-768-9549

Saturday Canopy Classes at the Museum - 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.  
Saturday, August 11 - First 50 Years of Oak Creek Township - 1840-1890, with Steve Schreiter  
Saturday, August 18 - Kensington Runestone in Alexandria, MN, with Lois and Steve Schreiter

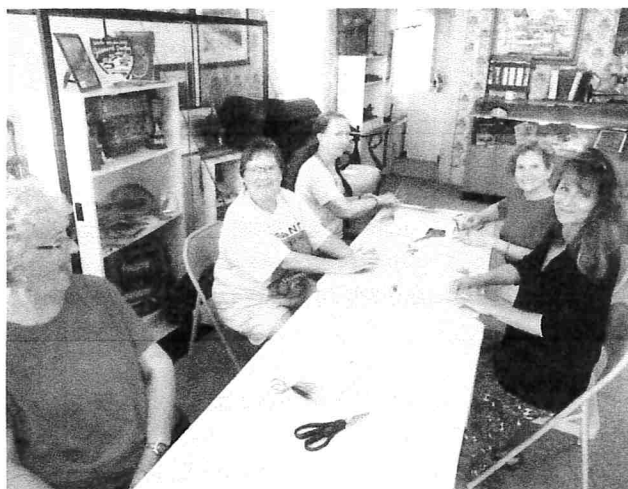
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Anna Passante, Reenactor  
President, archivist  
St. Francis Hist. Soc.



Caroline Donsing  
World War I Nurse



Linda Daly and Students  
Irish Courting Knot