

Canopy Class/History Talks Recap

"Canopy Class" was a name created several years ago to describe short historical lectures presented during the summer under a pop up canopy on the Museum grounds. Previous topics have ranged from birds of the Mill Pond to the Lawson Airplane.

The Society's first Canopy Talk of 2023 was held April 15. The canopy was set up in the back yard where presenter Lisa Foyer set out her soap making paraphernalia. She began by tracing soap making from its earliest ingredients, animal fat and wood ash lye, to the modern cold process, hot process and "melt and pour" process. She shared soap making anecdotes involving Messrs. Proctor and Gamble and the famous Ivory floating soap. Her presentation was peppered with personal experiences preparing her homemade soap for craft sales. Each attendee received a bag containing several bars of soap.

Our second event was held off-site on April 29. Society Vice-president Lois Schreiter invited visitors to her backyard gardens to check out over 1000 daffodils. Unfortunately it was wet!! Showers and cool weather greeted visitors but the cooler weather meant the daffodils were just about perfect and the magnolias, while a few days past their prime, still held their white blossoms. There were 13 visitors including a couple from West Allis and we collected \$55 in donations for the South Milwaukee Historical Society.



On May 13, Rose Flores shared the history of "Loretta's Field". Driving south on 15th Ave between Drexel Ave and Forest Hill Ave, west of the baseball field is a wooded area referred to as Loretta's Field. It's named for Loretta Handel. Her husband Victor & his brother Alfred started a business called Wisconsin Crane Services on Forest Hill Ave in 1940. The business only lasted a couple of years but their homes on Forest Hill Ave are still there. In the 1960s the city wanted part of their land to build Blakewood School. Victor sold his portion of the land but Loretta legally donated their parcel so the land would remain a green space for 99 years. Since the 1970s the area has been used as an outdoor classroom. Students enjoy nature walks learning about the flowers & trees, birds & bugs & critters. They even learned to tap maple trees and make syrup that the PTO served at a pancake breakfast!



Our latest history talk was on July 1. Steve Schreiter told a packed house all about Wingfoot Housing from the origins of the name to their installation in South Milwaukee. Wingfoots were temporary housing for returning WWII veterans. The SM site was located where the current high school is from approximately 1948 to the mid 1950s. One of the visitors was John Slusar who has done extensive research on the Wingfoot Houses in our area. John shared some additional information and pictures with us.



On July 15 Mark Draeger will be talking about the History of Radio in South Milwaukee. And the final talk will be a presentation by Bob Jelinek, director of the BE Museum.

Hope you can join us!

Canopy Class History Talk

10:30am to 11:30am at the museum

July 15—South Milwaukee Radio History

August 5—Bucyrus Erie-The Factory Changes Gears for War

Join us at the museum for this brief talk held under the canopy in the backyard-weather permitting! Talks will move indoors in bad weather and the museum will be open to tour for an hour after the talk.