



South Milwaukee Historical Society

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Richard Thinnas, President
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Sue Ziarek, Secretary
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Mark Draeger
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Karen Lyon

717 Milwaukee Ave, South Milwaukee, WI

Meetings are held the second Monday in even numbered months at the Museum. Please join us to learn more about South Milwaukee's history.

The Museum is open on the third Saturday of each month from 10am to 3pm. You may also call 414-520-1285 for questions or to arrange for a private tour.



From The President's Pen—April 2026

Hello everyone! Hope you had a safe winter. The weather was challenging to say the least. Our lawn and the late fall seeding took a hit from mother nature. We will have to re-seed the lawn in May hoping the weather will co-operate.

Spring is always a difficult season. The winds we had in late March did "a number" on our flags in front of the museum. The State of Wisconsin flag and the old historic Flag of South Milwaukee didn't hold up to the strong winds. We will now look to replace them. The city flag is a problem as there are few if any of them around anymore! If anyone out there has one and is willing to donate it to the museum we would be grateful.

Sadly our application to the Bucyrus Civic Grant Program was turned down. We will now be looking for other ways to preserve the documents, photographs and artifacts entrusted to our care.

We now have new South Milwaukee Historical Society T-shirts for sale. Sizes Small to 3XL, price \$20.00

As soon as the lawn starts growing we will begin on our memorial garden for Chester Grobschmidt who was our mayor and long time president of the Historical Society. Help would be appreciated in moving the historical tiles from the old High School!

We look forward to a wonderful summer with lots of activities planned. We await your visit - there is always something new to see and learn here!

Richard Thinnas – President

Preserving our Proud Past since 1972

Founders: Dennis Rankin, Penny Rankin

Initial Directors: George Hook, Mary McCarrier, Bruce Rayeske, Dora Lee Szewczuga, William Domoe, Lilia Dishong, Chester Grobschmidt

Museum Updates



Our thanks to Paul Stoving for putting together this display at the BE Event Center/Skyline Deli. Stop by to check it out. Be sure to visit the BE Industrial Museum on the second floor and enjoy a meal at the Deli.



Sue, Judy & Janet put up a new display in the Grand Ballroom that showcases some of the banks South Milwaukee had. Any one else still have Pinky?



Look What We Got!!!

Anyone lucky enough to get their shoes from Richard's Shoe Store will recognize the Treasure Chest. Richard and Lorraine Poplawski (pictured) recently donated the original chest to the Society. We have restocked it with treasures, and children of *all* ages will be able to earn a trip to pick something out by doing a scavenger hunt thru the museum.



Rich & Lorraine also gave us some of the original toys from the treasure chest and we have the on display at the museum. Some of them are shown here on top of the chest.



Rich and his grandson Kevin at store closing and in March 2026



Any original toys still out there? We'd love to have more of the original toys to display...

2026 South Milwaukee Garden Club & Historical Society Garden Tour

- ◊ Local artisans sprinkled throughout the gardens selling their handcrafted garden related items and more!
- ◊ Guest musicians sprinkled in the gardens.
- ◊ Raffle prizes and other surprises on the tour!
- ◊ Self-guided tour.
- ◊ Admission \$10.

& Art Fair

Saturday, June 20, 2026

Garden Tour 9am-2pm

Visit 4 beautiful gardens and enjoy the wonderful Artisans & Musicians that will be located throughout the gardens. For more information contact Patti Bergeson at 414-768-9549 or pbergeson55@gmail.com.

Tickets will be sold at Mari's Flowers, 905 Milwaukee Ave, South Milwaukee, 414-431-2030 or by contacting Patti Bergeson or John Bazan at 414-517-1095

The Historical Society will be open during the tour for same day ticket sales and raffle tickets. Raffle prizes will be on display and there are some updates to our gardens this year!

Speaking of gardens... It's a start!



Chet was instrumental in getting the shed at the museum so we got a small sign to go on there too!

We'll be starting on the memorial garden for Chet Grobschmidt soon. The sign was purchased locally from Styled Aesthetic on Rawson Ave. Great job! It's going to look really sharp in there.

FREE EVENT

Plant Exchange

South Milwaukee Garden Club & South Milwaukee Historical Society

Bring a Plant Take a Plant

Saturday, May 9, 2026 | 8am-11am

Not limited to plants!
Bring seeds, bulbs,
garden art & tools!

This is a free event and is an excellent
opportunity to network with other gardeners!

South Milwaukee Historical Society
717 Milwaukee Avenue, South Milwaukee

We have a new look!

T-shirts are \$20 and available in sizes Small to 3XL



Spruce up your wardrobe and support the Society at the same time. They would also make a nice Mother's day or Father's day gift!

Come on in... we're open!

Upcoming Saturdays
10am—3pm

May 16
June 20—Garden Tour
July 18
August 15

Visitors to the museum receive a coupon for \$5 admission to the Bucyrus Museum
Hope to see you there!

Additional items for sale at the museum include:

Pewter ornament—\$5

Note cards, postcards, SM ornaments (2 styles)

Midwest Pottery pieces

Books:

South Milwaukee Then to Now

Letters to Mettie

Carl Bergmans

Isador Skibba

Images of America

The Forget Me Not

Bay Mists and Spectacle Books

All purchases help support the Society's mission to preserve & share our city's proud past.



Have you checked out our website lately? Our webmaster has been busy adding new things and reorganizing the old. The website is constantly evolving so if you have any ideas for things you'd like to see, please send us an email.

Do you love a parade???

Would you care to represent the Historical Society in the Heritage Days parade on Saturday July 25 at 11:00 AM? You would need to provide your own vehicle. We will provide signs and candy. If you're interested please reach out to us. Deadline to register is July 1. Hope to hear from you!

South Milwaukee Heritage Days

TIDS & BITS

Running it up the flagpole

The April showers did more than just bring flowers. They shredded our City of South Milwaukee flag! Does any one have the original version of the City flag they would be willing to donate to the Society? Since our mission is to preserve the proud past, it seems more fitting that we fly the previous version of the flag rather than the new one.



Does anyone need a new rope for their flagpole? We accidently purchased more than we needed and aren't able to return it

Flag Pole Cord - FPHA-10SLWC
Halyard #10 5/16 inch silver w/c
70 feet long
Purchase price was \$95
Selling price is negotiable

Contact the Society by phone if interested.

Thank you!!

We recently received a number of very generous donations to the Society. Your donations support the preservation of our proud past and we're grateful for every dollar we receive!



Do you remember...May Day baskets! May Day baskets were small, handmade containers filled with flowers left anonymously at the doors of friends or neighbors on May 1st to celebrate spring. It involved hanging baskets on doorknobs, ringing the doorbell, and running away!! We remember making Kleenex carnations and construction paper baskets with our mom to surprise our neighbors! Such good memories!!

~ Judy Balestrieri and Janet (Balestrieri) Rodman

**SENIORS CAN AVOID TAXES ON RMDs
BY DONATING THEM TO
QUALIFIED NON-PROFIT CORPORATIONS.**

**DONATIONS ARE 100% DEDUCTABLE
UP TO \$100,000
(\$200,000 FILING JOINTLY).**

**(IRA custodians must arrange for
transfer of funds.)**

For detailed information,
google: "IRS RMD QCD"

The South Milwaukee Historical Society
is an all-volunteer 501 C(3) Corporation.
PROUD PAST, PROMISING FUTURE

Tours

The Museum is available for tours to Scout Groups, Civic Organizations and School Groups.

It is also available to individuals for research or tours. For more information or to arrange a tour, please call 414-520-1285

Thank you to everyone who signed up for the electronic newsletter. So far it's a big success! If you'd like to give it a try let us know. You can call or text 414-520-1285 or email us at Southmilwaukeehistory@gmail.com You can always go back to a paper copy if you decide you prefer that.



Suburban Soles

GUIDED NATURE WALK
2026 SCHEDULE

PROUDLY SUPPORTING
MKECO. PARKS

Find us on:
facebook



FRIENDS OF
GRANT
PARK

May 3, Birds ■ 8am, Area 5

Join **Betsy Abert** and another to witness the annual spring migration along our lakefront flyway, walking along paved and unpaved trails. If you have them, bring your own binoculars. All skill levels are welcome. Rain will postpone to Sunday, May 10.

May 17, Birds in the City ■ 8am, Area 5 parking lot

Join staff from Milwaukee County Parks and Wisconsin DNR to discover birds that live in our urban green spaces. Learn the basics of birding while spotting a variety of birds found throughout Grant Park. Staff will highlight actions and tools urban communities can implement to coexist with our native bird species. Binoculars suggested; loaners will be available. Dress appropriately for weather conditions with sturdy shoes along with bug spray, sunscreen, etc.

May 31, Invasive Landscape Plants in Native Ecosystems ■ 10am, Area 5 parking lot

Walk through the Seven Bridges to look at the impacts of ornamental landscape plants in a native plant community with **Marcia Wensing**, from Invasive Plant Association of Wisconsin (IPAW). We will look at how these invasives find their way into our woodlands and what can be done to reverse their impact. Discussion will tie into the Seven Bridges Ravine Restoration Concept Plan. Seven Bridges area is highly used due to how special this area is to both humans and wildlife alike.

June 14, Grant Park Nature Photography for Beginners ■ 8am, Area 5A brown pavilion

Join **Keith Orcholski** and **Violette Wood**, frequent photo contributors to Friends of Grant Park Facebook Page to connect with nature through photography and get tips to improve your shots and enhance your time in the field. Focus is on stills rather than videos. (Bring your cameras & photo gear)

June 28, Reforestation of Grant Park ■ 10am, Area 5

Join **Sarah Long**, Milwaukee County Parks and **Rick Kaiser**, Friends of Grant Park (Fogp) for a walk in Grant Park. Learn the key concepts and facts about Great Lakes coastal forests, benefits of trees and tree identification. See past restoration work and hear about future restoration goals for Fogp.

July 12, Marvelous Moths ■ 8:30pm, Wulff Lodge fire pit

July 23-31 is National Moth Week. This family friendly program celebrates these amazing creatures. Naturalist **Brooke Gilley** will bring special mothing equipment and her secret recipe for finding moths in Grant Park. She'll share stories and resources to participate in National Moth Week. We hope to make a "Moth-er" out of you! Bring a chair in case bench seats are taken.

July 26, South Milwaukee Takes Root ■ 10am, Grant Park Clubhouse South Parking Lot

Join local historian **Nels Monson** as we learn about South Milwaukee's first settlers— the family of John Fowle and the family's impact on the founding of both South Milwaukee and of Grant Park. The south parking lot is near the site of their original 1835 log cabin. We will walk to the mouth of the Oak Creek where some of South Milwaukee's earliest enterprises were located.

August 9, Benefits of Walking with Children in Nature ■ 10am, Area 5 parking lot

Join retired physician **Mike Minter** to learn the multiple benefits of walking with children in nature as well as a review of safety measures to consider. Children and adults of all ages are welcome.

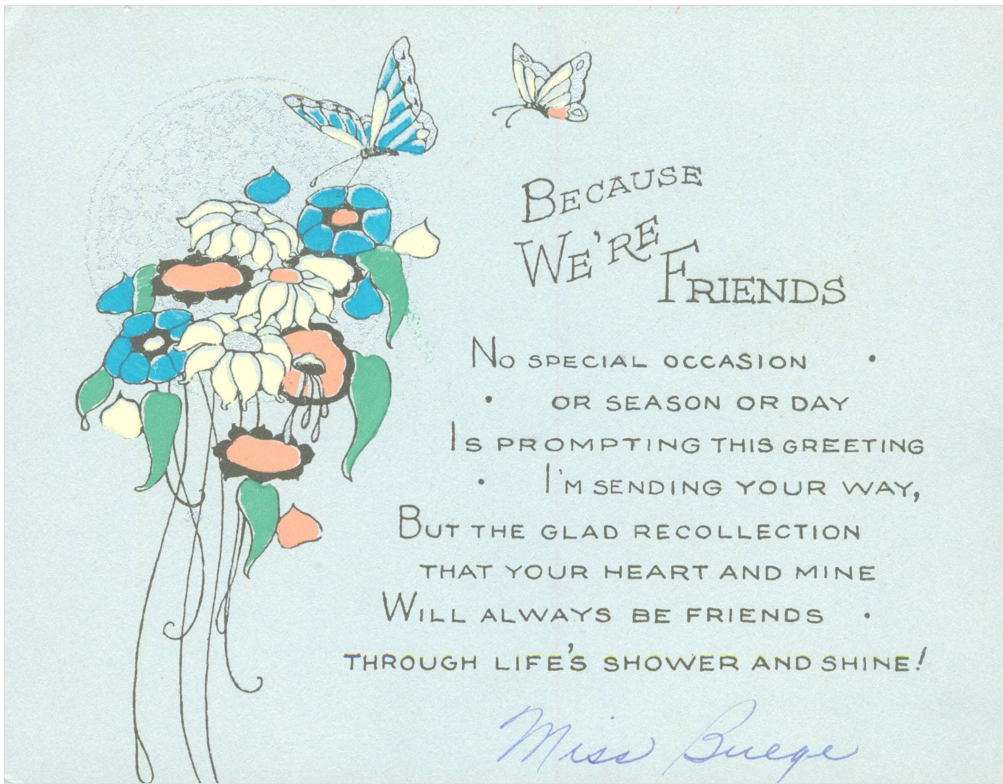
August 23, Tree-mendous Love for Trees ■ 10am, Area 5A

Join **Brian Morrison**, Wisconsin Master Naturalist, park caretaker at Virmond Park in Ozaukee County, and chair of the Events & Education committee for the Cedarburg Bog to learn foolproof ways to identify native trees! Why are some species so common in this area? And is it true that trees can communicate with one another? Let's discuss photosynthesis on a biology level and discover the miracle of this intimate, mutualistic relationship we hold with nature.



Free to attend. All events held rain or shine unless noted.
Details also on facebook and our Website: www.FOGP.org/soles

The South Milwaukee Historical Society is a 501.c.3 organization whose mission is “to preserve, honor and promote South Milwaukee’s rich history for generations to come.”



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717 Milwaukee Ave
South Milwaukee, WI 53172