



South Milwaukee Historical Society

Board of Directors

Richard Thinner, President
Sandy Swartz, Vice President
Judy Balestrieri, Treasurer
Sue Ziarek, Secretary
Don Bulley
Mark Draeger
June Acheson
Karen Lyon

717 Milwaukee Ave, South Milwaukee, WI

**Meetings are held the second Monday of each month at the Museum
Please join us to learn more about South Milwaukee's history.**

**The Museum is open on the first Thursday of the month from 1pm to 3pm
and on the third Saturday of each month from 10am to 3pm.
You may also call 414-762-6214 with questions or to arrange for a private tour.**

From The President's Pen—October, 2023

Boy! What a great time we had at our South Milwaukee Historical Society Museum since my last letter to you. So much has and is happening! The summer history talks were a great success. Good crowds enjoyed and learned a lot about soap making, Loretta's Field, Wingfoot Housing in South Milwaukee, the history of radio in South Milwaukee and the role that BE played in the war effort during WWII. The Open Doors Saturday saw very large crowds to our museum (over 120). I had a chance to meet with the newly hired teachers to the South Milwaukee School District during their Resource Fair in August; Our 50th year celebration dinner was held at the Bucyrus Club and Even Center, we had nearly 100 supporters. It was a fun evening. Bob Jelinek gave a great talk on BE and South Milwaukee in the early years.

We are still working on a dedicated phone system for the museum so that my home phone can get a rest! Also our door bells have "passed away" and we are having a lot of problems getting the old system to work and/or getting a wireless system.

Our bylaws have been revised, finally! We are now up-to-date. A couple of sad stories to report to you. The 150 year old mill stone that was destroyed during construction of the bridge over the Oak Creek is still a pile of small stones. We hoped for better news. I have not heard from our county reps nor the construction company, nor the State.

Also sad to relate our long time friend, original member and mentor, Lois Schreiter has resigned from the Board of Directors along with her husband Steve. They are an inspiration for all who work with and know them. Lois and Steve will still help out here on the first Thursday of the month opening the museum, weather permitting (OH NO, winter is coming).

Ending on a positive note, board member Sandy Swartz has stepped up to fill the Vice President's role vacated by Lois and we're welcoming two new board members, June Acheson and Karen Lyon! We look forward to having you on our team!

Enjoy the up-coming holidays!
We wish you and yours all the happiness
and success in the world.

Richard Thinner – 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

Canopy Class/History Talk Recap

On July 15 Mark Draeger gave a talk about the History of Radio in South Milwaukee.



And the final canopy talk on August 5 was a presentation by Bob Jelinek, director of the BE Museum.



All the canopy classes this year were a big hit with visitors. But now we need suggestions for next year's talks. Is there something about South Milwaukee that you've always wondered about or wanted to know more about? Is there something you're passionate

ANNUAL DINNER



Great crowd, great food and a wonderful program by Bob Jelinek, director of the Bucyrus Museum, titled "Bucyrus & South Milwaukee—Early Growth Together".



Mayor Jim Shelenske presented Society president Richard Thinnas with a proclamation in recognition of our 50th Anniversary.



Bob Jelinek also presented us with a certificate and a donation from the BE Museum and Skyline Catering for our work on the display cabinets in the event center. Stop by and check them out!

OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Proclamation

WHEREAS; The South Milwaukee Historical Society was founded in 1972 by a dedicated group of local citizens with a mission to preserve, honor, and promote South Milwaukee's rich history for generations to come; and

WHEREAS; The South Milwaukee Historical Society collects and records materials relating to the history of South Milwaukee; and

WHEREAS; The South Milwaukee Historical Society provides the public access to historical and genealogical research, history programs, group presentations, museum tours, and a scholarship program; and

WHEREAS; The South Milwaukee Historical Society offers the entirety of its services to the community at no cost; and

WHEREAS; Five decades of dedicated volunteers have been integral to the operation and success of the South Milwaukee Historical Society; and

WHEREAS; The South Milwaukee Historical Society has, through a wide range of activities, promoted a greater appreciation of the heritage of the City of South Milwaukee.

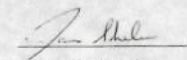
NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that I, Mayor Jim Shelenske, and the Common Council of the City of South Milwaukee do hereby extend our congratulations, and commendations, and place enormous value on the exceptional and selfless work and actions of the South Milwaukee Historical Society, its volunteers, donors, Officers, and Board of Directors

Attached to and made part of this proclamation for historical purposes are the names of the South Milwaukee Historical Society Charter Members.



Dated this 28th day of September 2023




James Shelenske,
Mayor

CHARTER MEMBERS

Mr & Mrs Ron Abrahamson	Mrs Annette A Kerlin
Nita G Anderson	Mr John Kern
Mr & Mrs Joseph Balestrieri	Mr & Mrs George Klipfel
Mrs Nick Barsamian	Mr & Mrs Adam Kotowicz
Mrs Margaret Barnes	Sharon Rae Landergott
Mr & Mrs Steven Batovsky	Mrs Gordon R Lewis
Mrs Louise Bentley	Mr & Mrs Leo Mang
Jacqueline Bentley	Rose Martinson
Mrs Anna Bergmann	Mrs Mary McCarrier
Mrs Emil Bettinger	Anne Monson
Mrs W Blume	Mr & Mrs Ronald Mueller
Mr Carl J Bridge	Mrs Mary Nelson
Mr & Mrs Don Broskowski	Mr Clarence O'Brien
Vance Chamberlain	Mrs E C Parrott
Mr Hilary Chybowski	Mrs D Paul
Dr & Mrs Neil Coley	Mrs Patricia Rabbe
Mrs Kathryn Deridder	Mr & Mrs Dennis Rankin
Lillian D Dishong	Mrs Lillian Fowle Rankin
Mrs Lola Doe	Mr & Mrs Bruce Rayeski
Mrs & Mrs Wm Domoe	Harold T Reed
Deaconess Hilda Donsing	Mr & Mrs John Rehak
Dr Collin C Drews	Mrs Francis E Roberts
Mrs Leora Duwe	Mr & Mrs Richard P Rouse
Mrs Gertrude Endthoff	Mr James Schauer
Mr & Mrs Felix Fabinski	Mrs Barbara Schouten
Mr & Mrs Charles Fecteau	Mr & Mrs Richard Schumacher
Mrs Leo Gates	Mrs Lois Schreiter
Mr & Mrs Robert Granec	Mr & Mrs Dennis E Schultz
Mr Gene Grobschmidt	Mrs Conrad Simbach
Mr & Mrs Chester Grobschmidt	Mrs Anne Slaaen
Mr Richard Grobschmidt	Mrs Helen Sobczak
Carmen A Hertz	Arthur Springer
Mr & Mrs George O Hook	Mrs William Steenrod
Mrs Angie R Hook	Amy Szewczuga
Mr & Mrs John H Hughes	Dora Lee Szewczuga
Mrs M Jacobs	Ray Thibedeau
Jacques Vieau Chapter D.A.R	Joyce VanDusen
Harry E Jagodzinski	Mrs William Warner
Agnes Kalinowki	Mr Gene Weber
Mrs Ada Kent	Mrs Lee Wendt
	Mr & Mrs Richard Wranovsky

South Milwaukee Journal.

Official Paper for South Milwaukee and Cudahy.

NEWSPAPER DIGITIZATION PROJECT—FINAL REPORT

By Steve Schrieter

We began this project in Fall, 2019 after a comment by Society member Pharis Brooks. He had been researching at the South Milwaukee Library and had difficulty reading and copying newspaper articles on microfilm. After our grant requests to WE Energies Foundation and Bucyrus Foundation were declined, it was decided to embark on a joint venture with the Library to digitize the newspapers. The Board of Directors of the Society agreed to solicit donations and further agreed to allocate monies from the 2019 Christmas Tea and the City's donation for preparation of a new city history to the Project. The Library Board had some funds available from a bequest and agreed to utilize a portion of them for the Project. At this point, local business man Jay Benkowski contacted the Society and agreed to match the donated amounts. With this most gracious offer, the project became real!

Initially the digitization work was done by the Wisconsin State Historical Society Microfilm Lab but their progress was slowed by Pandemic and staffing problems so a portion of the effort was transferred to a commercial facility, Crowley Company. Mr. Matt Prigge, former Research Librarian at the South Milwaukee Library, has done yeoman work in processing the scans and placing them online for our use. We cannot thank him enough for his efforts and dedication.

Both the Library and the Historical Society have obtained large outboard hard drives and maintain a backup to the newspaper files.

Go to the Library website, smlibrary.org/localhistory to check out the newspapers and other South Milwaukee publications digitized as part of this project.

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Join the
Friends of the Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse, Inc
and the
South Milwaukee Historical Society
for our 14th Annual

Old Fashioned Holiday Tea



Saturday, December 9, 2023

11:30 am* - 2:00 pm

at the

Grant Park Golf Clubhouse

100 Hawthorne Avenue - South Milwaukee

Enjoy a delicious lunch with tea and dessert
in this beautifully decorated Historic building

*Note: Doors open at 11:00 am

Cost: \$35.00 per person. Invite a friend!

Reservations will be taken after 8:00 am on 10/28/23
Phone 414-571-1191 Limit 6 reservations per call

Mail checks to:

Friends of the Mill Pond & Oak Creek Watercourse, Inc
810 Hawthorne Avenue
South Milwaukee WI 53172

Request to friends and supporters:

Our Holiday Tea and Bake Sale, to be held on December 9th, is fast approaching! This event is a joint fundraising effort sponsored by the Friends of the Mill Pond and the South Milwaukee Historical Society.

We are asking members and supporters of both groups to bake a batch of Christmas cookies or other baked goods to be used as desserts for the Tea and to be sold at our Bake sale.

Items may be dropped off at the Grant Park Golf Clubhouse:

Friday evening, December 8th between 6:30 pm and 8:00 pm

or

Saturday morning, December 9th between 9:00 am - 10:00 am



If you would like to volunteer to help with the Tea, please contact Judy at 414-630-8604. Workers are needed to help with set-up, kitchen staff, and clean-up.

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."



Open Doors

One of the things visitors to the museum saw during Open Doors South Milwaukee was a new display of **Uranium Glass**.

So...What is uranium glass: It's glass that has had uranium added to it before melting to create colors. Usually they were made with "low" levels of uranium, 2%-25%.

It was used for decorative tableware or household items. The uranium was added for the fluorescent effect it created and was very popular across Europe and North America. The easiest way to tell if uranium glass is real is to look at it under UV light (black light). Real uranium glass will glow green. The brightness of the color depends on the uranium content.

I first became aware of uranium glass during a visit to our sister museum in Mukwonago, WI. I was excited to find that we have a number of examples at our own museum and set up a display in the kitchen.

Manufacture of uranium glass dropped dramatically in the 1940s as a result of WWII because uranium was needed for other uses.

If you missed it during Open Doors, stop in during one of our open Saturdays and check it out then.

Richard Thinnas



A couple of our favorite pieces

Trek 'n Treat

Lois Schreiter and her daughter, Kathy Leffler represented the Historical Society at the Friends of Grant Park



Trek 'n Treat event in Grant Park, handing out candy to approximately 270 trick-or-treaters and their 4 footed friends.

And the answer is...



Turns out this is a cookie dough dropper. We're holding it upside down! Scoop the dough with the flat piece, squeeze it and the dough drops down on the pan.

**Come on in...
we're open!**

Upcoming Saturdays
10am—3pm
November 18
December 16
January 20, 2024
(weather permitting!)

Visitors to the museum get a coupon for \$5 admission to the Bucyrus Museum good thru 1-31-24
Hope to see you there!

What was this used for???



Beginning in 2024, membership fees are going up. We didn't want to do it, but the cost of everything has gone up significantly since we last set our dues. These increases apply to new and renewing members in the individual, family and business classes and NEW individual life members. Current life members are members for life!! You do not need to "renew" your life membership at the new rate (although we always appreciate additional donations.)

Life members may have noticed we also changed the mailing labels. The (L) indicating a life membership is gone. Going forward, if your name is darker (bold type) than your address, it indicates you are a life member.

The January 2024 newsletter will be sent electronically to anyone who included their email address on their membership form. Be sure to include your email address and check the box if you are willing to go paperless.

We appreciate your understanding and continued support of the Society and our mission to *Preserve our Proud Past*. Please send in your payment by 1/1/24.



South Milwaukee Historical Society

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Telephone: _____

e-mail: _____

I would be willing to receive the newsletter electronically.

Individual: \$15.00 - Annual

Family: \$20.00 - Annual

Business: \$25.00 - Annual

Individual Lifetime: \$125.00

Additional Donation: \$ _____

Please send completed form and check to:

South Milwaukee Historical Society

717 Milwaukee Avenue

South Milwaukee WI 53172

Thank you for supporting your local Historical Society!

We got Mail!

Excerpt from a letter to Richard Thinnas sent by Elaine M Zembrzuski Becker

I recently read an article by Sue Ziarek in the SM Historical Society newsletter. The topic of Sally's candy store is near and dear to my heart and memory. Sally's ranked right up there with Mrs. Barth's candy store on Rawson Ave. (As a child, my 15 cents went a lot further at Barth's.) My olfactory memories of Sally's are very strong. As a little girl, I sometimes stood outside the busy store while my father squeezed in line with the other holiday shoppers—Christmas and Easter. But my favorite memory of Sally's was as a little kid during Barn Storming. My Dad walked with my sisters and I, from 18th Ave, through the parkway, past St. Adalbert's, and over to Milwaukee Ave. Every school and church we passed were housing marching band members from all around the country. It was the evening before the Spectacle of Music and the city was truly "a buzz". We walked from one end of Milwaukee Ave. to the other, greeting people we knew from school, church, neighbors, relatives and those friends of my Dad's that worked at Kyle. The co-workers were particularly interesting to us kids who had never laid eyes on these men who worked daily with our father. Almost every store was open long beyond the usual closing hour. But the only store we actually went into was Sally's candy store at the far end of Milwaukee Ave. My Dad brought us all inside to pick a sucker. The blue were root beer, red cinnamon, and green were spearmint. They were opaque with an almost foam like texture. And then we walked all the way back down Milwaukee Ave toward our house. My sticky sucker had to be fully consumed before my father would heed my complaints of sore feet and pick me up onto his shoulders for the remainder of the journey. It was well worth the walk to get to Sally's.

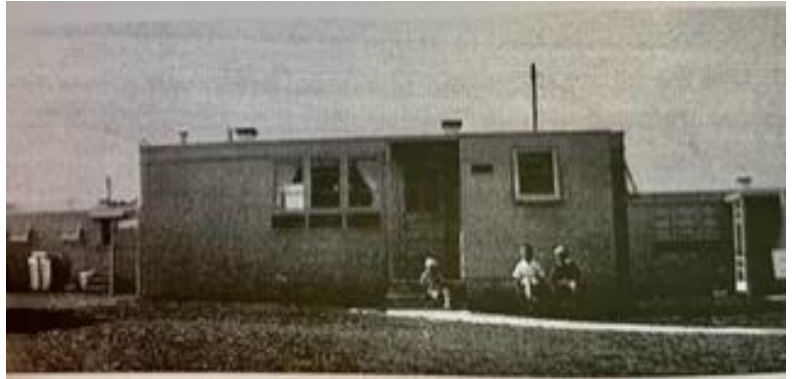
Thank you Elaine, for sharing those wonderful memories with the Society!!!

Anyone else have some memories they're willing to share? We'd love to hear from you!

WINGFOOT HOUSES

By Steve Schreiter

(from a Canopy Class presentation given on July 1st)



Wingfoot is a trademark of the Goodyear Tire and Rubber Company. It was inspired by the Greek God Mercury and first proposed by Frank Seiberling, Goodyear's first president. Goodyear designed and built the first prefab house of this design in 1943 to be used for wartime workers at its factory near Phoenix

Arizona. The building was rectangular, 26 ft. long and 8 ft. wide with 'pullout' sides that increased the bedroom area to 15 ft. wide. They could be transported on a flatbed semi truck trailer. Each unit contained a kitchen with stove, icebox, sink, a bathroom with shower, toilet and basin, hot water heater and furnace, The two bedrooms had built in closets and bunk beds. A small living area was located between the kitchen/bath on one end and the bedrooms on the other.

After WWII, a serious shortage of houses for returning servicemen existed because little if any new construction was done during the War. Milwaukee County recognized this shortages and decided to make temporary housing available for about 600 servicemen and their families. The county bought about 300 house trailers and a similar number of Wingfoot prefabs and decided to locate them on county parkland. Trailers would be located in areas that had bathroom facilities, prefabs would have water and sewer piping to reach house along with electrical service. Utilities would be provided by the County and included in the rent – about \$42 per month. Gas for heating was provided by external tanks bought by the renter. The largest installation in the County was in Cudahy, 180 units in what is now Warnimont Park.

The city of South Milwaukee participated in this project offering space near the northeast corner of Rawson Ave. and 15th Ave for the trailers and space for the 50 Wingfoots between Walnut and Cherry streets and east of 15th Avenue. We believe that the older building behind the Middle School and marked "Rawson Fieldhouse" was the service building for both the trailers and prefab houses. Some of this land may have been County owned, but it appears that a portion may have been deeded to the county by the City, at least the minutes of the Board of Supervisors for the County contains an entry wherein the City of South Milwaukee is asking that the property be returned to the City.

Each prefab house cost about \$2600 and installation cost was about the same amount.. Most of the Wingfoots were sold and removed in the early 1950's. Purchase price was \$300. The author does not know of any existing Wingfoots in this area. There are a few in Arizona and New Mexico.

Many thanks to Mr. Greg Mekka who built a Wingfoot model for the South Milwaukee Historical Society Museum, to Mr. Henry Reynolds who was interviewed on May 15th, and to Mr. John Slusar who shared draft pages from his manuscript on the Milwaukee County temporary housing project and is also the author of a four page article on Wingfoots contained in the Cudahy history book *Generations of Pride, Centennial History of Cudahy, Wisconsin*.

Neighbor helping Neighbor

The Cudahy Historical Society is raising funds to replace the roof on their historic 1892 railway depot. The challenge is to match & exceed a \$15,000 grant from an anonymous donor.

Go to their website if you're interested in donating. Cudahyhistoricalsociety.org And watch for their "Buy a Shingle" roof fundraiser coming soon.

Reminder to New Members...

Your membership comes with one hour of free genealogy research. Contact Steve Schreiter at 414-762-5214 for details.

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 Richard Thinnies at 414-762-6214



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South Milwaukee, WI 53172